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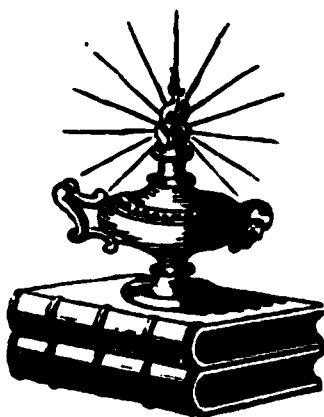
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VOL. XXII.

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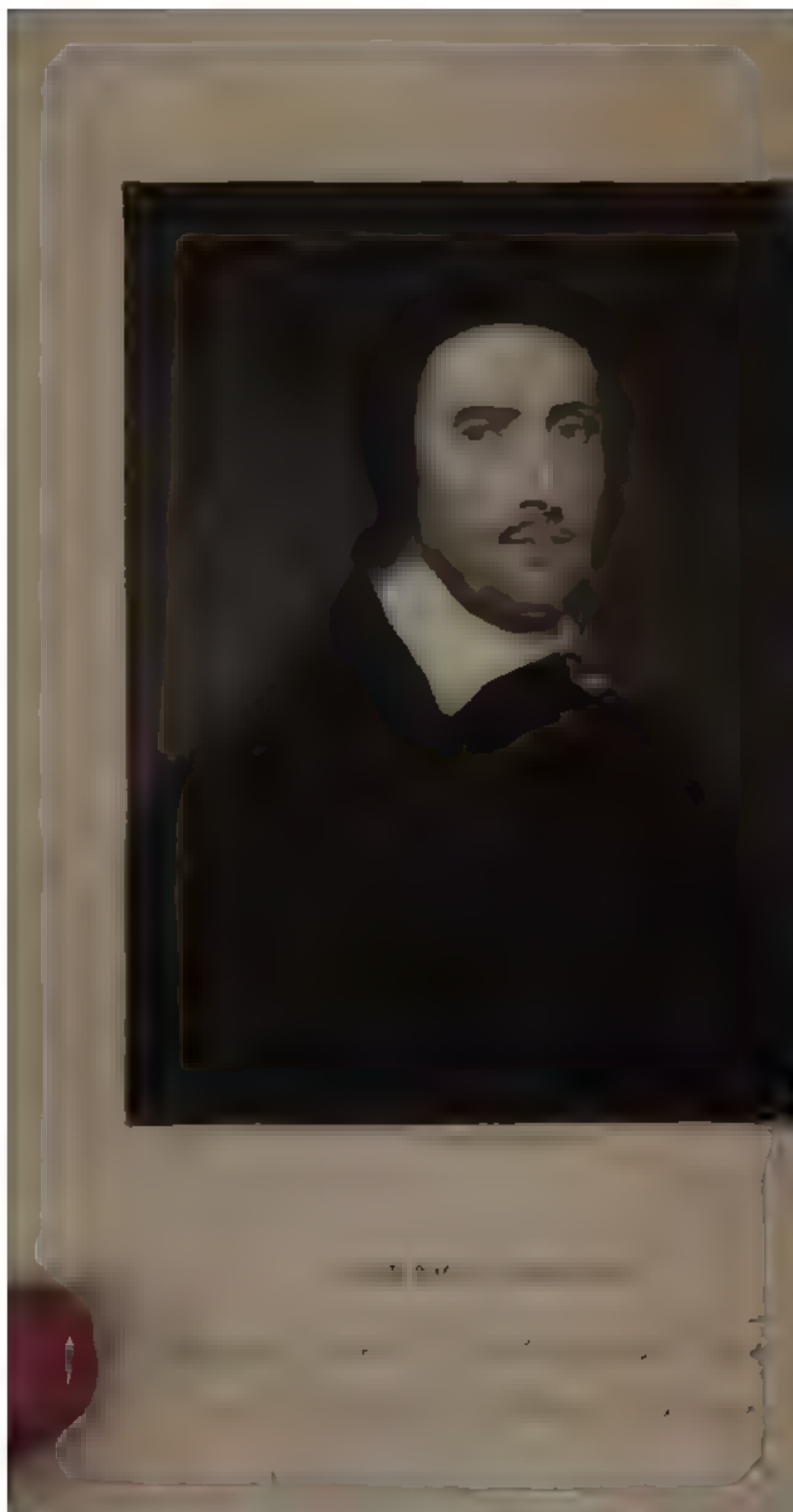
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VOL. I.

Qui sequitur me, non ambulat in tenebris.

WITH
AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

BY THE REV. H. STEBBING, M.A.

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MDCCLXXV.



INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

THE contemplation of the beautiful and the good is the noblest pleasure an intelligent creature can enjoy. There is an activity in the powers of the mind which excites only pain and disappointment when it falls short of the discovery of truth. This is the case when truth is not the immediate object of pursuit : the satisfaction is sought which something worthy of love, something intrinsically excellent is to give ; but as truth is the perfecting quality of whatever is good and beautiful, the pursuit is then only successful when it terminates in the enjoyment of its living light.

Religion being the knowledge and worship of God, the infinite source of existence, it is only through religion, or by methods over which it presides, that the mind of man can successfully seek so pure and elevated a possession as truth. To forget the Author of universal being, in any inquiry whatever, is the same thing as to lay aside the whole circle of primary axioms which render science possible. Nor is the simple acknowledgment of his existence, with some general tribute of

veneration, sufficient for the purposes of the mind, bent on the pursuit of truth. It is not till the confession of God's power and goodness is mingled with the warmth which renders it a religious confession, that it prepares the way for knowledge. When it rises to this, each attribute of his nature is discovered, as upholding some mighty portion of creation ; and may be traced through the most wonderful complications of material and intellectual beauty, till the brightness of its glory is lost again in infinity.

The highest effort of a sanctified philosophy is to trace the will of Deity acting on, and in, and through his creatures. Not only are God's power and love more clearly apprehended thereby ; but the real, the essential nature of things : for nature itself, in the whole vast compound, is but an emanation of his will ; and in proportion as we obtain an insight into that, the originating cause of all secondary being, we pass beyond the veil, and reach the secret sources of that great river of life, on whose waves we are borne, and of whose waters we daily drink ; but respecting the ' whence they come or whither they go ' of which, we can know nothing but as we know the Divine will.

But a creature like man, however elevated by the holy desire of seeing God in his works, cannot support himself long when the land-marks of human sympathy are far behind. Abundant proofs

of this are afforded in the history of philosophy and literature: those brilliant minds, whose towering fancies have so often taken an age by surprise, have, but in very few instances, enlarged the sphere of knowledge, or made the glory of truth more valued, or more attainable. The grandest discoveries, in every branch of human study, have ever been effected by men of earnest thought and gentle dispositions, whose intellectual constitution has presented features stamped with the strongest seal of humanity, and who have expressed themselves in the most joyful and triumphant tones, when they have succeeded in works beneficial to their race. So essential is the love of humanity, the feeling of brotherhood to the attainment of Divine knowledge, that we have the authority of inspiration for asking, ‘ If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen ? ’

Indications of the connexion between different provinces of being are plentifully scattered over the face of nature ; but those are the most interesting and convincing which the aspirations, the tendencies of the mind itself present. These, while they inspire us with a consciousness of capacities still to be developed, bring another sphere of being within the range of our thoughts, and by a strong and vital impulse of intellectual sympathy, we strive continually to discover, in that higher sphere

of existence, something which is like, though higher, purer, happier than, ourselves. The heathens clothed their gods in human forms, and gave them earthly passions. It was by a common law of nature that they did so. They sought communion with an invisible world, by peopling it with forms which they knew by sight; and they satisfied the yearnings of pride, by thus rendering the deification of man a subject both of speculation and desire. In proportion to the powers of mind employed in these attempts to find deity in humanity, and humanity in deity, the personification shone forth in that lustre of beauty which perfect self-possession, peace, and love may be expected to bestow. But it was impossible that a religion of sense should support even the abstractions of sense, when thus dignified by the light of exalted intellect; and heathenism, therefore, did at no time practically allow of that enjoyment, and those satisfactions of pride, which its system had been contrived to bestow.

Now, if all the passages of speculative philosophy, in which allusion is made to the powers and the wants of man, were brought together, and compared with the history of certain great periods in the progress of civilization, it would be found that a universal prayer has been put up from the beginning of time, for the communications, the sanctions, the definite encouragements

of religion. Politicians have felt the want thereof; poets have confessed the necessity of divine knowledge, to give worth to any vision of beauty or delight; and philanthropists have closed their noblest efforts with the acknowledgment that they needed guidance and promises from Heaven, to carry through their designs. In populous cities, in the retirement of the country, in nations where refinement has nothing more to desire, in lands where science sheds not a single ray of light—in every province, that is, of the peopled world, men gathered together have urged each other to require something from on high. Strange and unfit, it is true, have been the methods employed to obtain this desired blessing; but the desire has universally existed; and the petition, under one form or the other, has never ceased to be made by the whole great family of God's reasoning creatures.

Has the desire been met—has the petition obtained an answer? is the solemn inquiry of reflecting minds. Every thing depends upon the result of its institution; for if so universal a claim—petitions so urged—have found no hearing at the throne of Deity, we may well and reasonably conclude, with the Epicurean, that the Almighty has utterly thrown off all regard for his creatures. But this is an opinion which demands the sacrifice of almost every sentiment dear to the

heart of man ; which isolates the world from whatever has been deemed connected with it by the silver chords of love ; and brands with falsehood the sweetest of our hopes and expectations. The sacrifice of so precious a possession ought surely not to be made without strong arguments to prove its necessity ; and nothing can render it necessary, but the certainty that God has not attended to the wants and solicitations of his creatures.

In such a matter, the pretensions of any system which has a general and apparent adaptation to the necessities of mankind, would deserve a fair examination ; but if certain characteristics are to be taken as the test of a divine origin, the whole of the inquiry will be reduced to a question respecting the presence or absence of these distinguishing marks. Let it be required, then, that the religion proposed to mankind be of universal application ; that it set forth and establish laws so binding the elements of society together, that they shall adhere, not simply by natural attraction, but by the force of an intrinsical benevolence ; that it explain the chief difficulty of the present system of things, and satisfies those earnest longings after the knowledge of immortality, which are almost inseparable from human nature :—let these be the signs required to prove, by internal evidence, the claims of a religion, and then we shall have but to examine the different systems in vogue, by the

test so afforded, to determine which among them, if any, has the fairest claim to reverence.

Christianity is supported by a mass of evidence gathered from its comparison with every other religion, and from its being brought consecutively under the light of every branch of knowledge. This cannot be said of any other religion. No system of faith was ever submitted to an ordeal like that through which the gospel has had to pass. At the very commencement of the dispensation, the appeal was made to the most enlightened nations of the earth. Had the same course been followed as in the case of other religions, the attempt to plant it in the world would have been begun amid the barbarians who were preparing to overrun the civilized quarters of the globe, and subject them to the iron sway of war and superstition. First embraced by nations rude and uncultivated, and accustomed to obey only the impulses of passion, it might have been carried, as they proceeded in their conquests, to more enlightened lands, which gradually yielding to the desolating influences of oppression, would have at length received the religion thus forced upon their minds.

But the very reverse of this took place : and Christianity has had to endure the searching scrutiny of generations remarkably superior in intelligence to those which preceded its introduc-

tion. Though preached to the mass of the people, and received by them as the religions of antiquity had been accepted by the multitude, it has always been deemed of sufficient importance to interest the best and loftiest minds in every nation ; and it is by these that the proofs and evidence of its truth have been submitted to the severest examination. And what has been the result ? The people have been justified in their faith. Critics, philosophers, and historians, confirm by their judgment the reasonableness of the popular devotion.

In examining the pretensions of Christianity to this general acceptance, it is found not only to afford the revelations, the promises, the rules and sanctions which properly form the body of a religion, but to present these particulars in the most acceptable and convincing form. It is easily conceivable that the Almighty Father might have made known his will, and revealed his intentions with regard to man, in a variety of ways different to that which he has employed ; but a candid view of the subject will generally lead to the conclusion, that no better, or more merciful, or more convincing method could be devised than that followed through the medium of Christianity. And if we were required to state, in as few words as possible, our reasons for this conviction, we should say that they are found in that apostolic account of the system, ‘ God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself !’

It was remarked at the beginning of this Essay, that the Author of the universe must himself be sought if his works are to be properly studied; and that it is only by his recognized presence that the real nature of things can appear displayed to the mental eye. But in whatever degree the light of nature is increased by the holy contemplation of its true source, the human heart only feels its sympathies satisfied when out of the vast illuminated circle it can draw towards itself the forms and expressions of individualized beneficence; or when in the wide-spread volume of infinite intelligence it can meet with passages which speak the language of its own feelings and desires. And this it can rarely do. The idea of nature is itself a generalization; and the mind can by no process of its own give the breathing truth of reality to its abstracts. A system of natural religion, consequently, is not to be deduced from the simple contemplation of the external universe. The power and wisdom manifested in creation deprives atheism and idolatry of excuse; but do not speak of the Almighty's will with sufficient clearness to guide mankind in the paths of life. To render these dim revelations at all morally efficacious they have to be met by the strong persuasives and warnings of conscience; which was placed in the soul as the perpetual interpreter of the universal law, and whatever promises of good are indicated by the general cha-

racter of the system. But however the lessons of this divine monitor may serve for the purposes of morality, and the conviction of obstinate violators of its principles, the most powerful of its monitions, though combined with the counsels of nature, afford no constant or uniform indication of the love of God for the species. The discovery of this principle can only follow the actual manifestation of the Almighty's power and love acting immediately on the creature. No type is sufficient for man but man; and the first feature of Christianity combines one of the most irrefragable proofs of its divine origin. The Son of man—the man Christ Jesus, as the epithets of the Saviour of the world, the eternally appointed minister of the Father's love, bring into view a characteristic of the system which renders it in the highest degree acceptable to the human race. The most profound attention consequently is due to the doctrine of the Saviour's humanity. It is because he became man that man can feel a deeper and more vital interest in the religion he taught, than in any other either actual or conceivable system. 'God with us:—with us, not by a universal presence only, but by union, affords an assurance of blessedness and glory, of the conservation and perpetuity of human nature, which would be inconceivable on any other foundation. Deity contemplated through an inferior medium reveals none of that mysterious splen-

dour in the light of which the soul both sees and feels light: contemplated through the supposed nature and attributes of angels, the mind discovers less than when it fixes its thoughts on the Godhead itself: the nature and attributes of Divinity being more clearly revealed to a loving and devout soul, than those of any of his creatures removed from our sphere of existence. It is only in union with humanity, therefore, that we can behold and think of him as our God and our Father: and such is the wonderful complexity of comforting mysteries in Christianity, that the heavenly being in whom we see the Father, is the being who has performed for us the wonderful work of redemption, and who has reduced to practice, and by way of example, every law and precept which form the mould in which the Almighty originally fashioned us.

Thus considered, the character and history of Christ present a subject of infinite importance to the human mind. To look through nature up to nature's God is a noble exercise of thought: but it is both a nobler and more comforting exercise to contemplate God in man as he was in Christ; for thereby we not only discover the perfection of divine holiness, but are led to feel the essential relations which exist between sanctified humanity and God—relations which are chords of love and channels of life to every soul on whom the blessing of reconciliation is pronounced.

The records of the gospel abound in facts and statements strikingly calculated to enable the contemplative mind to understand the character of the Redeemer. His words and actions were severally developements of that mingled power and love which demonstrated his eternal oneness with the Father, and that entire and perfect benevolence which induced him to become the Redeemer of mankind; and the study of these memorials of Christ, carried on in the spirit fitted for such an exercise, will nourish the mind till it becomes full of the purest wisdom, and acquires those perceptions of the divine goodness which give to love the force of an unchanging and irresistible law.]

But the contemplation of Christ's character is to be so carried on as to produce not general impressions only, but clear and practicable lessons of heavenly morality. The first object to be aimed at is the attainment of that apprehension of the Redeemer's nature which produces a warm and genial sentiment of love. When this is acquired, the earnest-minded Christian makes his affections instrumental to the production of such works as most clearly evidence the worth of his faith and principles; and to foster and keep up this activity of holy purposes, he observes, with intense but humble thoughtfulness, whatever circumstances are recorded of the Saviour which can be made applicable to his own capabilities of obedience and worship.

As the Great Exemplar to his people, Christ is not less sufficient or perfect than as their atoning sacrifice and mediator. In him the due submissiveness of youth displayed its fairest graces. He taught how poverty might dignify itself by contentment, nobleness of demeanour, and sacred duties. The power which he possessed was infinitely greater than that of the combined potentates of the earth; and the manner in which he kept it under the constant control of pure wisdom and benevolence, instructs the mightiest in their duty. Nor was he without rich stores of wealth. His poverty was a voluntary subjection to need. The abundance of the earth waited on his will to use it. At a word, Mammon must have given up the possession of his stores, and yielded them to Jesus:—the temple, magnificent as it was, knew no other master; and to no other prince but him did the Jews owe tribute. But had he used his wealth, he could not have effected the design for which he became man. He withheld his hand, therefore, from the treasures which it might so instantly have grasped: he did not allow himself to gather wealth about him, though it might have been employed for the purpose of relieving the poor and afflicted. It was his will—and highest wisdom doubtlessly furnished the reasons for his so doing—to sanctify every other way of doing good more conspicuously than he did the use of wealth. This affords a very

solemn lesson against the love of riches, or the too anxious pursuit of them on any plea whatever; and the rich man who truly believes in, and loves the Redeemer, must needs feel tremblingly awake to his responsibility in the use of wealth, when his Lord so manifestly neglected it even as an instrument of good.

The value of Scripture is not always duly estimated even by devout believers. It is commonly read in large masses; and one set of circumstances or of doctrines is so exclusively sought for in these wide excursions over the surface of revelation, that the depths are rarely sounded, or those signs observed which indicate the presence of hidden treasures. Were the information contained in Scripture to be estimated by the length of the record, it would be rightly regarded as limited and imperfect; for there never was a book which professed to give particular information on topics so various and important as those of Scripture, in so short a compass. The true reason of this is found in the apostolic maxim, that the letter profiteth nothing—it is the Spirit that giveth life.

Thus the annals of the gospel require to be weighed with the utmost attention. Every thought Christ expressed was an embodied ray of light from the innermost recesses of divine wisdom; and, light itself, it sheds a heavenly lustre on the soul which receives it. As the word of God, he made

manifest the will, the reasons, the decrees of God; but his mode of revealing the mind of his Father was not confined to direct addresses. He taught by his miracles and his actions, as well as by words; and the wise reader of Scripture, therefore, studies his history with a minute attention to each particular in the narrative. The combination of circumstances in the divine life is itself a wonderful subject for contemplation. There is its deep tranquillity—the peace which passeth understanding, giving grace and sweetness to every word and gesture. There is its active charity—girding up the loins for any exertion, and giving wings to the feet. Then come its manifold hopefulness of disposition—shedding an air of joyousness over its stayed and serious deportment:—its wisdom, which bestows dignity on the mildest of its virtues, and power on the least of its resolves:—its humility, that meet preparation for all the sympathies of universal brotherhood:—its magnanimity, subduing every artifice of selfishness, and inspiring resolution sufficient to overcome the powers of darkness:—its fortitude, giving strength to suffer:—its patience, instructing to forbear:—and, finally, its holiness, bestowing on every tendency of nature the character of a spiritual and godlike attribute. This combination of heavenly graces is to be traced in every child of heaven; but the divine lineaments show only faintly through the veil of mor-

talities : a ray of light does sometimes dart upward from the depths of the purified soul, and gives a startling and affecting distinctness to one or the other of the features of the inward character ; but the illuminating grace passes quickly away, and leaves behind it only a dim impression in the minds of men, that there is in human nature, in its best state, something angelical and divine.

Unlike the evanescent beauty of mere moral holiness, the perfection of Christ's character shines with a steady and unchangeable lustre. ' It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell. In him ' are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' This is the sublime language of the Spirit when he draws the portraiture of the Son of God ; and we may learn, therefrom, that the study of his character demands the exercise of our best faculties. The treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid in Jesus Christ, are like the most beautiful laws and mysteries of nature working in the bosom of the material universe ; and as these reveal themselves not to the idle gazer, nor give comfort to a weak superstition, wondering at their phenomena, so neither are the essential graces of our Lord's character discoverable by the negligent observer. Infidels have acknowledged that he was venerable for his virtues ; and the general impression left upon the mind by early reading, clings to many a heart that has lost all other sense of Chris-

tianity, but that of reverence for the character of Christ. It is only, however, when not the *letter* merely but the *spirit* of his character is contemplated that its beauty is discovered, or its exemplary perfection made intelligible to the soul. 'If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his : ' and, ' Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.' In which sentence we see the study of his example brought under the same spiritual rules as that of every other branch of evangelical theology ; and the example made practicably imitable by the assignment of its mysterious perfection to a cause sufficient for the effect, and one of which the force is ever communicable and extending.

The example of Christ can lose none of its interest or utility by the lapse of time, or any change in customs or opinions. It belongs to all ages ; it applies to every sharer in the common nature of man. No circumstance of rank, no peculiarity of disposition, no advantage or disadvantage of mind, can deprive a human being of the hope, or emancipate him from the obligation, of becoming conformable to the image of Christ. This universality of his example depends on the same grand principle as the limitless efficacy of his atoning sacrifice. His human nature had no restricting peculiarity : it was perfect ; embracing every feature and property of the human personality, and thereby ren-

dering him the true representative, the everlasting *persona* of our race.

In studying, therefore, the history of Christ, we must remember, first, that it is in the Spirit by which he was animated we are to look for the living source of his sublime virtues; and, next, that whatever be our condition or character, he is the pattern after which we must be moulded, as the creatures of God and expectants of immortality.

When we speak of the mind or spirit of Christ, we refer to the pure, incorruptible essence which developed its energies in the utterance of those noble truths, and in the performance of those acts of charity and holiness, which led to the sudden but weighty exclamation, 'He hath done all things well!' Uncontaminated by sin, Christ felt no resistance, even in his simple humanity, to the fulfilment of his Father's will: but it deserves to be noticed, that his soul, pure, and therefore mighty, as it was, in the apprehension and love of truth, did not encounter the author of evil without a previous preparation by the eternal Spirit. It descended from heaven, and abode upon him; and the Father, it is added, gave not the Spirit by measure unto him. In him, therefore, began that union of the human and divine Spirit, by which, through succeeding generations, the power of Satan was to be assailed, and finally destroyed. The humanity of Christ became completely imbued

with grace, poured from the eternal source of truth and sanctity. Thus was the dew of heavenly life shed upon his soul as man ; and entering into its innermost recesses, the natural virtues of that soul grew up, and bore fruit which had in every respect the glow and perfect beauty of a celestial produce. He who would walk according to the example of his Master, must always bear in mind this great and sublime mystery :—God was manifest in the flesh, but he was justified in the Spirit ; Christ was put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the Spirit. The outward form of humanity is a letter that killeth, if the believer rest contented with the grace which it reveals, instead of regarding it as a beautifully woven veil, and looking for the time when it shall be laid aside, that the true glory which it conceals may beam freely forth. It is not by a figure of speech that Jesus Christ is described as an elder brother among his people. He is so truly such, that the lineaments of his countenance, the tendencies of his nature, the tone of his language, the *idioms*, as it were, of his character, are to be looked for in all his followers. And there they have been found from generation to generation, and will be found till the family has become a nation, overspreading the whole earth, and reasserting the noble privileges of the original humanity, the archetype of the race, which, as it grew into life, displayed throughout its vitality the image of the Creator. But who sees not that this consum-

mation of the plan of redemption, through the divine representative of the law, depends upon the Redeemer and the redeemed having drunk of the same Spirit, the eternal Spirit of life, light, holiness, and love ?

These themes are full of consolation to reflecting minds ; and the writer would rejoice if fitting leisure and opportunities were allowed him to pursue the thoughts which arise at the contemplation of such truths. But sublime as is the subject of the spiritual imitation of Christ, it is in every respect experimental and practical. There is no precept of the simplest, humblest morality, unembraced in its scope. The sober honesty which gives confidence in the daily transactions of business ; the refinement of honour ; the pledges on which the social compact, in its various relations, rests secure,—all find their reasonableness and their confirmation in this universality of Christ's example. It is true that the lessons by which the duties alluded to are inculcated, may be taught without reference to so lofty a standard : but that standard of morality must surely be of infinite value, and deserving of the highest respect, which, while it points to the perfections of God as, according to his finite capacity, imitable by man, is sufficiently penetrating in its nature, and minute in its directions, to reach the condition of the least exalted, either in mind or fortune.

There is another point which demands profound

attention respecting the force of Christ's example. It is authoritative; and that in a more complete and perfect manner than can possibly be the case with any other example claiming our imitation. But it does not appeal to us simply in the language of authority: it addresses every principle of our nature. While awe and reverence are properly excited by the consideration that he whom we are called upon to imitate is our Lord, and the appointed Judge of our race, the force of gentle and heart-melting pathos breathes in almost every sentiment he uttered:—'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted:' 'Come unto me all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you:' 'The Son of Man came to save that which was lost:' 'My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.' And to these tender sentiments of compassion he added corresponding instances of active goodness. The only son of a widow, the loving brother of unprotected sisters, the children of parents whose hearts yearned over them with a sorrow that would not be comforted—these were the objects on whom he exercised his life-restoring power. Nor were his lesser miracles performed without a similar attention to the particular case and circumstances of the sufferers. 'Daughter, be of good cheer,' was his comforting address to her who had now expended all her substance, and was

on the point of seeing herself left to unnoticed suffering. 'I have no man to help me, Lord,' reached the soul of Jesus: and he who had from year to year in vain sought to be helped into the healing waters, found himself at once cured of his infirmity.

It is almost impossible to contemplate these demonstrations of benevolence without an emotion of love; and in that emotion is the true impulse to a faithful copying of the example. The particular acts are not imitable, but the tenderness and charity in which they originated are; and thus the proper study of Christ's history will both move the mind to delight in his counsels and animate the heart to obey his laws. There is a persuasiveness in the sweetness of his benevolence in every respect answerable to the subduing grandeur of his power. They who were present on the stormy deep when he quieted the tempest, felt, without doubt, the genial influence of his word, 'Peace, be still,' long after the storm had ceased. The act of his might had a continued force, and in its continuance was love; and in this, as in other instances, the miracle he performed had a comprehensiveness of meaning which expands itself almost in the same manner as a prophecy becomes developed by a successive fulfilment. The sick are healed; the blind receive their sight; the dead are raised by the spiritual efficacy of Christ's word, now ope-

rating in a manner proper to the condition of mankind; and in looking back to the history of his life upon earth, we find the typical representation in his visible miracles of those which are thus at present wrought by the diffusive influence of his grace. And from this sense of his continual presence, and the powerful working of his Spirit, the believer derives an argument for persevering in the imitation of his example, peculiarly impressive and encouraging. Never was unity of design so clearly and beautifully exhibited as in the scheme of salvation; every means of good which it brings into action transmits its influence to the remotest corner of the heavenly kingdom. The mercy which its sovereign shows to any portion of his subjects by direct application, benefits indirectly all the rest; and the instances of holiness which any of his people afford, as followers of his example, glorify both themselves and him.

The importance of this subject is sufficiently apparent, if the design of Christianity be generally understood. We are never safe when either piety or morality is trusted to abstractions of reason, or vague impulses of feeling. Ages of error, supported by the eccentricities of visionaries and the bold pretensions of pharisaical zealots, prove the melancholy truth of this remark. That we lose what is most lovely in the constitution of humanity, most valuable in civilization, when scepticism sets

up utility as the public idol, is equally proved by many a sad passage in the later history of our race. And where is safety to be found? In the paths illuminated by Christianity, and in the imitation of Christ as an example to all men. Enthusiasm, brought into subjection to him, lays aside its wings, and contents itself with walking the earth, as the mistress of virtue and benevolence. The abstractions of the visionary are converted into substantial rules of holy action: zealotry grows calm, and instead of calling down fire from heaven, only prays for men's conversion; and the theory of utility becomes a corollary to the grand and universal rule, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself.'

Let the imitation of Christ's example be acknowledged as an aim worthy of our best efforts: and much has already been gained, if the acknowledgment be made with thoughtful sincerity. The mind rises with a feeling of gladness at the prospect of its emancipation from error, and the attainment of a condition in which it will be essentially worthy of love and admiration. It is difficult to image forth ourselves in a higher and better state of being, by a mere intellectual effort; but the difficulty is removed when we can behold our likeness reflected in the pure mirror of Christ's humanity. Examples of virtue have in all ages been

pointed to, as affording directions and incentives to aspirants after good: but there is no one example to which an individual could feel willing wholly to conform himself, without doing violence to his innate sense of independence and personal importance. The utmost he can determine on is to show obedience to those rules of rectitude which were best obeyed by the object of his veneration. But the example of Christ is at war with no feeling of individuality. Every feature of the personal character is allowed to retain its particular expression. The change which takes place is that of conversion from the old age of sin and corruption, to the vigorous youth of a new-born spirit. Truth, freedom, purity, and love, are now its essential qualities; and these qualities it derives from him in whom they have resided from the beginning.

The noble production which these observations are intended to introduce, will afford the reader an abundant harvest of valuable thoughts. It will teach him, if he read it with a constant reference to Scripture, and self-application, how infinite is the advantage he enjoys in being counted among the people of Christ. He will learn how every principle of his nature may be improved by obeying maxims which light up the pages of the gospel: and how happy is the condition of that man, who, too cautious to trust to the fallible conclusions of

human reason, but too anxious about the discovery of truth to rest contented with himself, has found in the example of the Son of God, an answer to all his enquiries, and in the gifts of his grace a supply for all his wants !

Two portions of Jeremy Taylor's writings have already appeared in the " Sacred Classics." Like the present work, they abound in the sublimest beauties of Christian eloquence ; and the writer of this Essay refers the reader for some account of the prelate and his labours, to the excellent prefaces with which the volumes were introduced by his highly-esteemed friend and brother editor.

H. S.

London, September 23, 1835.

THE
G R E A T E X E M P L A R
OF
SANCTITY AND HOLY LIFE.

CONTENTS.

PISTLE DEDICATORY	Page
CE	1
XHORTATION	7
	65

PART I.

I.—The History of the Conception	87
Considerations upon the Annunciation of the blessed Mary	91
II.—The bearing of Jesus	99
III.—The Nativity	112
Considerations upon the Birth of Jesus	116
DISCOURSE I.—Of Nursing Children	126
IV.—The great and glorious Accidents happening about the Birth of Jesus	143
Considerations upon the Apparition of the Angels to the Shepherds	153
Considerations upon the Epiphany	160

SECT. V.—Of the Circumcision	.	.	.	.
DISCOURSE II.—Of the Virtue of Obedience				
Considerations upon the Presentation of Jesus				
in the Temple	.	.	.	.
DISCOURSE III.—Of Meditation	.	.	.	.
SECT. VI.—Of the Death of the Holy Innocents, and				
the Flight of Jesus into Egypt	.	.	.	.
Considerations thereupon	.	.	.	.
SECT. VII.—Of the younger years of Jesus, and his Dis-				
putation with the Doctors	.	.	.	.
Considerations thereupon	.	.	.	.
SECT. VIII.—Of the preaching of John the Baptist	.	.	.	.
Considerations thereupon	.	.	.	.
DISCOURSE IV.—Of Mortification and				
corporeal Austerities	.	.	.	.
SECT. IX.—Of the Baptism and Temptation of Jesus	.	.	.	.
Considerations thereupon	.	.	.	.
DISCOURSE V.—Of Temptation.	.	.	.	.
DISCOURSE VI.—Of Baptism Part I.	.	.	.	.
————— Baptizing Infants, Pt. II.	.	.	.	.

TO THE
RIGHT HON. AND MOST TRULY NOBLE LORD,
CHRISTOPHER LORD HATTON,
BARON HATTON OF KIRBY, &c.

MY LORD,

WHEN interest divides the church, and the calentures of men breathe out in problems and unactive discourses, each part in pursuance of its own portion, follows that proposition which complies with and bends in all the flexures of its temporal ends ; and while all strive for truth, they hug their own opinions dressed up in their imagery, and they dispute for ever, and either the question is indeterminable, or, which is worse, men will never be convinced. For such is the nature of disputings, that they begin commonly in mistakes, they proceed with zeal and fancy, and end not at all but in schisms and uncharitable names, and too often dip their feet in blood. In the meantime, he that gets the better of his adversary, oftentimes gets no good to himself ; because, although he hath fast hold upon the right side of the problem, he may be an ill man in the midst of his triumphant disputations. And therefore it was not here that God would have man's felicity to grow. For our condition had been extremely miserable, if our final state had been placed upon an uncertain hill, and the way to it had been upon the waters, upon which no spirit but that of contradiction and discord did ever move. For the man should have tended to an end

are the purchase of such undertakings, the fruit of such culture and labours ; for it is only a holy life that lands us there.

And now, my Lord, I have told you my reasons, I shall not be ashamed to say that I am weary and toiled with rowing up and down in the seas of questions which the interests of Christendom have commenced ; and in many propositions of which (I am heartily persuaded) I am not certain that I am not deceived ; and I find that men are most confident of those articles which they can so little prove, that they never made questions of them. But I am most certain, that by living in the religion and fear of God, in obedience to the king, in the charities and duties of communion with my spiritual guides, in justice and love with all the world in their several proportions, I shall not fail of that end which is perfective of human nature, and which will never be obtained by disputing.

Here, therefore, when I had fixed my thoughts upon sad apprehensions that God was removing our candlestick, (for why should he not, when men themselves put the light out, and pull the stars from their orbs, so hastening the day of God's judgment ?) I was desirous to put a portion of the holy fire into a repository, which might help to reenkindle the incense, when it shall please God religion shall return, and all his servants sing, *In convertendo captivitatem Sion*, with a voice of eucharist.

But now, my Lord, although the results and issues of my retirements and study do naturally run towards you, and carry no excuse for their forwardness, but the confidence that your goodness rejects no emanation of a great affection ; yet in this address I am apt to promise to myself a fair interpretation, because I bring you an instrument and auxiliaries to that devotion whereby we believe you are dear to God, and know that you are to good men. And if these little sparks of holy fire, which I have heaped together, do not give life to your prepared and already enkindled spirit ; yet they will sometimes help to entertain a thought, to actuate a passion, to employ and hallow a fancy, and put the body of your piety into fermentation, by presenting you with the circumstances and parts of such meditations which

are symbolical to those of your daily office, and which are the *passee temps* of your severest hours. My Lord, I am not so vain to think, that in the matter of devotion, and the rules of justice and religion, (which is the business of our life,) I can add any thing to your heap of excellent things: but I have known and felt comfort by reading, or hearing from other persons, what I knew myself; and it was unactive upon my spirit, till it was made vigorous and effective from without. And in this sense I thought I might not be useless and impertinent.

My Lord, I designed to be instrumental to the salvation of all persons that shall read my book: but unless (because souls are equal in their substance, and equally redeemed) we are obliged to wish the salvation of all men, with the greatest, that is, with equal desires, I did intend in the highest manner I could, to express how much I am to pay to you, by doing the offices of that duty which, although you less need, yet I was most bound to pay, even the duties and charities of religion; having this design, that when posterity (for certainly they will learn to distinguish things and persons) shall see your honoured name employed to separate and rescue these papers from contempt, they may with the more confidence expect in them something fit to be offered to such a personage. My Lord, I have my end, if I serve God and you, and the needs and interests of souls; but think my return full of reward, if you shall give me pardon, and put me into your litanies, and account me in the number of your relatives and servants: for indeed, my Lord, I am most heartily,

Your Lordship's most affectionate

And most obliged servant,

JER. TAYLOR.

P R E F A C E.

CHRISTIAN religion hath so many exterior advantages to its reputation and advancement, from the author and from the ministers, from the fountain of its origination, and the channels of conveyance, (God being the author, the Word Incarnate being the great doctor and preacher of it, his life and death being its consignation, the Holy Spirit being the great argument and demonstration of it, and the apostles the organs and conduits of its dissemination,) that it were glorious beyond all opposition and disparagement, though we should not consider the excellency of its matter, and the certainty of its probation, and the efficacy of its power, and the perfection and rare accomplishment of its design. But I consider that Christianity is therefore very little understood, because it is reproached upon that pretence which its very being and design does infinitely confute. It is esteemed to be a religion contrary in its principles, or in its precepts, to that wisdom whereby the world is governed, and commonwealths increase, and greatness is acquired, and kings go to war, and our ends of interest are served and promoted;¹ and that it is an institution

¹ Vide Lucan. lib. viii.

so wholly in order to another world, that it does not at all communicate with this, neither in its end nor in its discourses, neither in the policy nor in the philosophy. And therefore as the doctrine of the cross was entertained at first in scorn by the Greeks, in offence and indignation by the Jews; so is the whole system and collective body of Christian philosophy esteemed imprudent by the politics of the world, and flat and irrational by some men of excellent wit and sublime discourse; who, because the permissions and dictates of natural, true, and essential reason are at no hand to be contradicted by any superinduced discipline, think, that whatsoever seems contrary to their reason is also violent to our nature, and offers indeed a good to us, but by ways unnatural and unreasonable. And I think they are very great strangers to the present affairs and persuasions of the world, who know not that Christianity is very much undervalued upon this principle, men insensibly becoming unchristian, because they are persuaded that much of the greatness of the world is contradicted by the religion. But certainly no mistake can be greater. For the holy Jesus, by his doctrine, did instruct the understandings of men, made their appetites more obedient, their reason better principled, and argumentative, with less deception, their wills apter for noble choices, their governments more prudent, their present felicities greater, their hopes more excellent, and that duration which was intended to them by their Creator he made manifest to be a state of glory. And all this was to be done and obtained respectively by the ways of reason and nature, such as God gave to man then when at first he designed him to a noble and immortal condition; the Chris-

tian law being, for the substance of it, nothing but the restitution and perfection of the law of nature.¹ And this I shall represent in all the parts of its natural progression; and I intend it not only as a preface to the following books, but for an introduction and invitation to the whole religion.

2. For God, when he made the first emanations of his eternal Being, and created man as the end of all his productions here below, designed him to an end, such as himself was pleased to choose for him, and gave him abilities proportionable to attain that end.² God gave man a reasonable and an intelligent nature. And to this noble nature he designed as noble an end: he intended man should live well and happily, in proportion to his appetites, and in the reasonable doing and enjoying of those good things which God made him naturally to desire. For since God gave him proper and peculiar appetites with proportion to their own objects, and gave him reason and abilities, not only to perceive the sapidness and relish of those objects, but also to make reflex acts upon such perceptions, and to perceive that he did perceive, which was a rare instrument of pleasure and pain respectively; it is but reasonable to think, that God, who created him in mercy, did not only proportion a being to his nature, but did also provide satisfaction for all those appetites and desires which himself had created and put into him. For if he had not, then the being of a man had been nothing but a state of perpetual affliction, and the creation of men had been the greatest unmercifulness in the world; disproportionate objects being mere instances of affliction,

¹ Epiph. Parnar. lib. i. tom. num. 5. Eras. in 11 cap. Matth.

² Chalcid ad Timæ. 16.

and those unsatisfied appetites nothing else but instruments of torment.

3. Therefore, that this intendment of God and nature should be effected, that is, that man should become happy, it is naturally necessary that all his regular appetites should have an object appointed them, in the fruition of which felicity must consist. Because nothing is felicity, but when what was reasonably or orderly desired is possessed: for the having of what is not desired, or the wanting of what we desire, or the desiring of what we should not, are the several constituent parts of infelicity; and it can have no other construction.

4. Now the first appetite man had, in order to his great end, was to be as perfect as he could; that is, to be as like the best thing he knew, as his nature and condition would permit.¹ And although, by Adam's fancy and affection to his wife, and by God's appointing fruit for him, we see the lower appetites were first provided for, yet the first appetite which man had, as he distinguishes from lower creatures, was to be like God; (for by that the devil tempted him;) and in order to that, he had naturally sufficient instruments and abilities. For although by being abused with the devil's sophistry he chose an incompetent instrument; yet because it is naturally certain, that love is the greatest assimilation of the object and the faculty, Adam, by loving God, might very well approach nearer him according as he could. And it was natural to Adam to love God, who was his Father, his Creator, the Fountain of all good to him, and of excellency in himself: and whatsoever is understood to be such, it is as natural for us to love, and we do it for the same reasons for which we love any thing

¹ Arist. de Cælo.

; and we cannot love for any other reason, but one or both these in their proportion apprehended.

But because God is not only excellent and, but by being supreme Lord, hath power to give us what laws he pleases; obedience to his therefore becomes naturally, but consequently, necessary, when God decrees them, because he will make himself an enemy to all rebels and disobedient sons, by affixing penalties to the transgressors. And therefore disobedience is naturally insistent, not only with love to ourselves, because it brings afflictions upon us, but with love to our supreme Lawgiver: it is contrary to the natural love we bear to God so understood, because it makes him our enemy, whom naturally and reasonably we cannot but love; and therefore also opposite to the first appetite of man, which is to be like God, in order to which we have naturally no inclination but love, and the consequents of love.

And this is not at all to be contradicted by a pretence that a man does not naturally know there is a God. Because by the same instrument by which we know that the world began, or that there was a first man, by the same we know that there is a God, and that he also knew it too, and conversed with that God, and received laws from him. For in the discourse of man, and the law of nature, and the first appetites, and the first reasons, abstractedly, in their own complexions, and without all their additions and provisions, we discourse jejunely, and vainly, and unprofitably. For as man did not come into the world by chance, nor by himself, but from the universal cause; so we know that this universal cause provided for all that was necessary for him in order to

the end he appointed him, And therefore to be the history of a man's reason, and the philosophy of his nature, it is not necessary for us to place him there, where without the consideration of a God, society, or law, or order, he is to be placed, that in the state of a thing rather than a person, God by revelations and scriptures having helped us with propositions and parts of story relating to man's first and real condition, from thence we take the surest account, and make the most perfect derivation of propositions.¹

7. From this first appetite of man to be like God, and the first natural instrument of it, love, descend all the first obligations of religion. In which there are some parts more immediately and naturally expressive, others by superinduction and positive command. Natural religion I call such actions which either are proper to the nature of the thing we worship; such as are giving praises to him, and speaking excellent things of him, and praying to him for such things as we need, and a readiness to obey him in whatsoever he commands; or such as are expressions proportionate to our nature that make them; that is, giving to God the best things we have, and by which we can declare our esteem of his honour and excellency; assigning some portion of our time, of our estate, the labour of our persons, the increase of our store, first-fruits, sacrifices, oblations, and tithes;² which therefore God rewards, because he hath allowed to our nature no other instruments of doing him honour, but by giving to him in some manner, which we believe honourable and apt, the best things we have.

¹ Chrysip. de Dils, iii.

² Epict. c. 38.

1. The next appetite a man hath, is to beget like himself; God having implanted that appetite into man for the propagation of mankind, and given it as his first blessing and permission, 'It is good for man to be alone;' and, 'Increase and multiply.' And Artemidorus had something of this doctrine, when he reckons these two parts of nature, *Deum colere, mulieribus vinci*;¹ "to worship God, and to be overcome by women," in proportion to his two first appetites of nature, to be like God, and to have another like himself. This appetite God only made regular by his first prohibitions or satisfaction. He gave to man a woman as a wife, for the companion of his sorrows, for an instrument of multiplication; and yet provided him but of one, and intimated he should have more.² Which we do not only know by an after-revelation, the holy Jesus having declared it to have been God's purpose; but Adam himself understood as appears by his first discourses at the entertainment of his new bride. And although there were permissions afterward of polygamy, yet there might have been a greater pretence of necessity at first, as a cause of enlarging and multiplying fountains rather than channels; and three or four at first would have enlarged mankind by greater proportion than many more afterwards: little distances from the centre make greater and larger figures than when they part near the fringes of the circle. And therefore those after-permissions were to avoid a greater evil; not a hallowing of the licence, but a reproach of their infirmity. And certainly the multiplication of wives is contrariant to

¹ De Somn. sign.² Gen. ii. 24.

guish them, and because they might do equal injury, and invade each other's possessions, and disturb their peace, and surprise their liberty. And so also was their power of doing benefit equal, though not the same in kind. But God, who made man a sociable creature, because he knew 'it was not good for him to be alone,' so dispensed the abilities and possibilities of doing good, that in something or other every man might need or be benefited by every man.¹ Therefore that they might pursue the end of nature, and their own appetites of living well and happily, they were forced to consent to such contracts which might secure and supply to every one those good things, without which he could not live happily. Both the appetites, the irascible and the concupiscible, fear of evil and desire of benefit, were the sufficient endearments of contracts, of societies, and republics.² And upon this stock were decreed and hallowed all those propositions, without which bodies politic and societies of men cannot be happy. And in the transaction of these, many accidents daily happening, it grew still reasonable, that is, necessary to the end of living happily, that all those after-obligations should be observed with the proportion of the same faith and endearment which bound the first contracts. For though the natural law be always the same, yet some parts of it are primely necessary, others by supposition and accident; and both are of the same necessity, that is, equally necessary in the several cases. Thus, to obey a king is as necessary and naturally reasonable, as to obey a father, that is, supposing there be a king, as it is

¹ Senec. de Benefic. c. 1.

² *Commoda præterea patriæ tibi prima putare.*—Lucil.

certain naturally a man cannot be; but a father must be supposed. If it be made necessary that I promise, it is also necessary that I perform it; for else I shall return to that inconvenience which I sought to avoid when I made the promise. And though the instance be very far removed from the first necessities and accidents of our prime being and production, yet the reason still pursues us, and natural reason reaches up to the very last minutes, and orders the most remote particulars of our well-being.

11. Thus, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to kill, are very reasonable prosecutions of the great end of nature, of living well and happily. But when a man is said to steal, when to be a murderer, when to be incestuous, the natural law doth not teach in all cases: but when the super-induced constitution hath determined the particular law, by natural reason we are obliged to observe it; because though the civil power makes the instance, and determines the particular, yet right reason makes the sanction, and passes the obligation. The law of nature makes the major proposition; but the civil constitution, or any superinduced law, makes the assumption in a practical syllogism. To kill is not murder; but to kill such persons whom I ought not. It was not murder, among the Jews, to kill a man-slayer before he entered a city of refuge: to kill the same man after his entry, was. Among the Romans, to kill an adulteress or a ravisher in the act was lawful; with us it is murder.¹ Murder, and incest, and theft always were unlawful; but the same actions were not always

¹ A. Gellius, lib. 10, 23.

the same crimes. And it is just with these disobedience, which was ever criminal; the same thing was not estimated to be disobedient nor indeed could any thing be so, till the sanction of a superior had given the instance of offence. So for theft:—to catch fish in rivers, deer, or pigeons, when they were esteemed *naturæ*, of a wild condition, and so *primò occisus* was lawful; just as to take or kill badgers and beavers and lions: but when laws had appropriated rivers, and divided shores, and imparked and housed pigeons, it became theft to take without leave. To despoil the Egyptians was theft, when God, who is the Lord of all possible, had bidden the Israelites; but to do so now was a breach of the natural law, and of a divine mandment. For the natural law (I said) is constant in the sanction, but variable in the instances and the expression. And indeed the laws of Moses are very few: they were but two at first, and but two at last, when the great change was made from families to kingdoms. The first is, “to do duty to God,” the second is, “to do to ourselves and our neighbours,” that is, to our neighbours as to ourselves; all those actions which naturally, reasonably by institution, or emergent necessity are required to a happy life. Our blessed Saviour reduced the law to these two:—1. ‘Love the Lord with thy heart;’ 2. ‘Love thy neighbour as thyself.’ which I observe, in verification of my former course, that love is the first natural bond of man to God, and so also it is to our neighbour.¹ And therefore all intercourse with our neighbour was for

¹ Sec. iv.

in, and derived from, the two greatest endearments of love in the world : a man came to have a neighbour by being a husband and a father.

12. So that still there are but two great natural laws binding us in our relations to God and man ; we remaining essentially, and by the very design of creation, obliged to God in all, and to our neighbours in the proportions of equality ; [as thyself ;] that is, that he be permitted and promoted in the order to his living well and happily, as thou art. For love being there not an affection, but the duty that results from the first natural bonds of love, which began neighbourhood, signifies justice, equality, and such reasonable proceedings which are in order to our common end of a happy life, and is the same with that other, ‘ Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do you to them : ’ and that is certainly the greatest and most effective love, because it best promotes that excellent end which God designed for our natural perfection. All other particulars are but prosecutions of these two ; that is, of the order of nature ; save only that there is a third law, which is a part of love too, it is self-love, and therefore is rather supposed than at the first expressed, because a man is reasonably to be presumed to have in him a sufficient stock of self-love, to serve the ends of his nature and creation : and that is, that man demean and use his own body in that decorum which is most orderly and proportionate to his perfective end of a happy life ; which Christian religion calls, sobriety. And it is a prohibition of those uncharitable, self-destroying sins of drunkenness, gluttony, and inordinate and unreasonable manners of lust, destructive of nature’s intendments, or at least no ways promoting them.

For it is naturally lawful to satisfy any of these desires, when the desire does not carry the satisfaction beyond the design of nature ; that is, to the violation of health, or that happy living which consists in observing those contracts which mankind thought necessary to be made in order to the same great end ; unless where God hath superinduced a restraint, making an instance of sobriety to become an act of religion, or to pass into an expression of duty to him. But then it is not a natural, but a religious sobriety ; and may be instanced in fasting or abstinence from some kinds of meat, or some times or manners of conjugation. These are the three natural laws described in the Christian doctrine, that ‘ we live, 1. godly, 2. soberly, 3. righteously.’ And the particulars of the first are ordinarily to be determined by God immediately, or his vicegerents, and by reason observing and complying with the accidents of the world, and dispositions of things and persons : the second, by the natural order of nature, by sense and by experience : and the third by human contracts and civil laws.

13. The result of the preceding discourse is this: man, who was designed by God to a happy life, was fitted with sufficient means to attain that end, so that he might, if he would, be happy ; but he was a free agent, and so might choose. And it is possible that man may fail of his end, and be made miserable, by God, by himself, or by his neighbour ; or by the same persons he may be made happy in the same proportions as they relate to him. If God be angry or disobeyed, he becomes our enemy, and so we fail ; if our neighbour be injured or impeded in the direct order to his happy living, he hath equal right against us as we against him, and

so we fail that way; and if I be intemperate, I grow sick and worsted in some faculty, and so I am unhappy in myself. But if I obey God, and do right to my neighbour, and confine myself within the order and design of nature, I am secured in all ends of blessing in which I can be assisted by these three; that is, by all my relatives; there being no end of man designed by God in order to his happiness, to which these are not proper and sufficient instruments. Man can have no other relations, no other discourses, no other regular appetites, but what are served and satisfied by religion, by sobriety, and by justice. There is nothing whereby we can relate to any person, who can hurt us, or do us benefit, but is provided for in these three. These therefore are all, and these are sufficient.

14. But now it is to be enquired, how these become laws obliging us to sin if we transgress, even before any positive law of God be superinduced: for else, how can it be a natural law, that is, a law obliging all nations and all persons, even such who have had no intercourse with God by way of special revelation, and have lost all memory of tradition; for either such persons, whatsoever they do, shall obtain that end which God designed for them in their nature; that is, a happy life according to the duration of an immortal nature; or else they shall perish for prevaricating of these laws. And yet if they were no laws to them, nor decreed and made sacred by sanction, promulgation, and appendant penalties, they could not so oblige them as to become the rule of virtue or vice.

15. When God gave us natural reason, that is, sufficient ability to do all that should be necessary to live well and happily, he also knew that some

appetites might be irregular, just as some stomachs would be sick, and some eyes blind; and a man being a voluntary agent, might choose an ill with as little reason as the angels of darkness did; that is, they might do unreasonably because they would do so: and then a man's understanding should serve him but as an instrument of mischief, and his will carry him on to it with a blind and impotent desire; and then the beauteous order of creatures would be discomposed by unreasonable or unconsidering or evil persons. And therefore it was most necessary that man should have his appetites confined within the designs of nature, and the order to his end: for a will without a restraint of a superior power, or a perfect understanding, is like a knife in a child's hand, as apt for mischief as for use. Therefore it pleased God to bind man by the signature of laws, to observe those great natural reasons, without which man could not arrive at the great end of God's designing; that is, he could not live well and happily. God therefore made it the first law to love him, and, which is all one, to worship him, to speak honourably of him, and to express it in all our ways, the chief whereof is obedience. And this we find in the instance of that positive precept which God gave to Adam, and which was nothing but a particular of the great general. But in this there is little scruple; because it is not imaginable that God would in any period of time not take care that himself be honoured; his glory being the very end why he made man: and therefore it must be certain, that this did at the very first pass into a law.

16. But, concerning this and other things, which are usually called natural laws, I consider, that

the things themselves were such, that the doing them was therefore declared to be a law, because the not doing them did certainly bring a punishment proportionable to the crime; that is, 1. a just deficiency from the end of creation, from a good and happy life; 2. and also a punishment of a guilty conscience: which I do not understand to be a fear of hell, or of any supervening penalty, unless the conscience be accidentally instructed into such fears by experience or revelation; but it is a *malum in genere rationis*, a disease or evil of the reasonable faculty: that, as there is a rare content in the discourses of reason, there is a satisfaction, an acquiescency, like that of creatures in their proper place, and definite actions, and competent perfections; so in prevaricating the natural law there is a dissatisfaction, a disease, a removing out of the place, an unquietness of spirit, even when there is no monitor or observer. *Adeo facinora atque flagitia sua ipsi quoque in supplicium verterant. Neque frustrà præstantissimus (Plato) sapientiæ firmare solitus est, si recludantur tyrannorum mentes, posse aspici laniatus et ictus, quando ut corpora verberibus, ita sævitia, libidine, malis consultis animus dilaceretur,*¹ said Tacitus² out of Plato.³ It is naturally certain that the cruelty of tyrants torments themselves, and is a hook in their nostrils,

¹ "So they themselves connected their vices and evil deeds into their own punishment. Nor did that most excellent master of wisdom (Plato) speak in vain, when he said, that if the souls of tyrants were laid open, the evil mind would be seen torn and scourged with rage and lust, even as bodies are with the lash."

² Annal. vi.

³ Whose words are:—'Ἀλλὰ πολλάκις τῷ μεγάλῳ βασιλέως ἐπιλαβόμενος, ἢ ἄλλῳ ὁτιῦν βασιλέως ἢ δυνάτῃ, κατέϊδεν

and a scourge to their spirit ;¹ and the pungen of forbidden lust is truly a thorn in the flesh, f of anguish and secret vexation.

*Quid, demens, manifesta negas ? En, pectus inustæ
Deformant maculæ, vitisq̃ue inolevit imago,*²

said Claudian of Rufinus. And it is certain to and verified by the experience and observation all wise nations, though not naturally demonstrable, that this secret punishment is sharpened and promoted in degrees by the hand of heaven, the finger of the same hand that wrote the law in our understandings.

17. But the prevarications of the natural law have also their portion of a special punishment, besides the scourge of an unquiet spirit. The man that disturbs his neighbour's rest meets with disturbances himself: and since I have naturally more power over my neighbour than he hath over me, (unless he descended naturally from me,) he hath an equal privilege to defend himself, and to secure his quiet, by disturbing the order of my happy living, as I do his. And this equal permission is certainly so great a sanction and signification of the law of justice, that in the just proportion of my receding from the reasonable prosecution of my end, in the same proportion and degree my own infelicity is become certain; and this in several

ἐδὲν ὑγιὲς ὄν τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀλλὰ διαμεμασιγωμένην, ἐξ ἐμεσὴν ὑπὸ ἐπιτορκιῶν καὶ ἀδικίας.—In Gorgia, sub finem.

¹ Lucian. in Catapl.

² “ Why, maddened, truth deny ? Behold thy breast
Plague-spots deform—base crimes thy soul infest !”

ees up to the loss of all; that is, of life itself. where no further duration or differing state is
 vn, there death is ordinarily esteemed the
 test infelicity: where something beyond it is
 vn, there also it is known that such prevarica-
 makes that further duration to be unhappy.
 that an affront is naturally punished by an
 nt, the loss of a tooth with the loss of a tooth,
 n eye with an eye, the violent taking away of
 her man's goods by the losing of my own. For
 a liable to as great an evil as I infer, and natu-
 r he is not unjust that inflicts it. And he that
 unk is a fool or a madman for the time, and
 is his punishment, and declares the law and
 sin; and so in proportions to the transgressions
 obriety. But when the first of the natural laws
 olated, that is, God is disobeyed or dishonoured;
 hen the greatest of natural evils is done to our
 hbour, then death became the penalty: to the
 , in the first period of the world; to the second,
 he restitution of the world; that is, at the be-
 ring of the second period. He that did attempt
 ill, from the beginning of ages might have
 a resisted and killed, if the assaulted could not
 be safe: but he that killed actually, as Cain
 could not be killed himself, till the law was
 le in Noah's time; because there was no per-
 living that had equal power on him, and had
 a naturally injured. While the thing was
 ug, the assailant and the assailed had equal
 er; but when it was done, and one was killed,
 hat had the power or right of killing his mur-
 r is now dead, and his power is extinguished
 a the man. But after the flood, the power was
 into the hand of some trusted person, who was

to take the forfeiture. And thus I conceive these natural reasons, in order to their proper end, became laws, and bound fast by the band of annexed and consequent penalties : *Metum prorsus et noxam conscientiae pro fœdere habere*, said Tacitus. And that fully explains my sense.

18. And thus death was brought into the world; not by every prevarication of any of the laws, by any instance of unreasonableness; for in proportion to the evil of the action would be the evil of the suffering, which in all cases would not arrive at death; as every injury, every intemperance should not have been capital. But some things were made evil by a superinduced prohibition, as eating one kind of fruit; some things were evil by inordination: the first was morally evil, the second was evil naturally. Now, the first sort brought in death by a prime sanction; the second, by degrees and variety of accidents. For every disobedience and transgression of that law which God made as the instance of our doing him honour and obedience, is an integral violation of all the band between him and us; it does not grow in degrees according to the instance and subject-matter; for it is as great a disobedience to eat when he hath forbidden us, as to offer to climb to heaven with an ambitious tower. And therefore it is but reasonable for us to fear, and just in him to make us at once to suffer death, which is the greatest of natural evils, for disobeying him. To which death we may arrive by degrees, in doing actions against the reasonableness of sobriety and justice, but cannot arrive by degrees of disobedience to God, or irreligion: because every such act deserves the worst of things; but the other naturally deserves no greater evil

than the proportion of their own inordination, till God, by a superinduced law, hath made them also to become acts of disobedience as well as inordination; that is, morally evil, as well as naturally. For, 'by the law,' saith St. Paul, 'sin became exceeding sinful,'¹ that is, had a new degree of obliquity added to it. But this was not at first. For, therefore, saith St. Paul, 'before' (or, 'until') 'the law, sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law :'² meaning, that those sins which were forbidden by Moses's law, were actually in the manners of men, and the customs of the world; but they were not imputed, that is, to such personal punishments and consequent evils which afterwards those sins did introduce: because those sins which were only evil by inordination, and discomposure of the order of man's end of living happily, were made unlawful upon no other stock, but that God would have man to live happily, and therefore gave him reason to effect that end; and if a man became unreasonable, and did things contrary to his end, it was impossible for him to be happy; that is, he should be miserable in proportion. But in that degree and manner of evil they were imputed; and that was sanction enough to raise natural reason up to the constitution of a law.

19. Thirdly, the law of nature being thus decreed and made obligatory, was a sufficient instrument of making man happy; that is, in producing the end of his creation. But, as Adam had evil discourses and irregular appetites before he fell, (for they made him fall,) and as the angels, who

¹ Rom. vii. 13.

² Rom. v. 13.

had no original sin, yet they chose evil at the first, when it was wholly arbitrary in them to do so or otherwise ; so did man. ‘ God made man upright, and he sought out many inventions.’ Some men were ‘ambitious, and by incompetent means would make their brethren to be their servants; some were covetous, and would usurp that which by an earlier distinction had passed into private possession ; and then they made new principles and new discourses, such which were reasonable in order to their private indirect ends, but not to the public benefit, and therefore would prove unreasonable and mischievous to themselves at last.

20. And when once they broke the order of creation, it is easy to understand by what necessities of consequence they ran into many sins and irrational proceedings. Ælian tells us of a nation who had a law binding them to beat their parents to death with clubs, when they lived to a decrepit and unprofitable age.¹ The Persian magi mingled with their mothers and all their nearest relatives. And by a law of the Venetians, (says Bodinus²) a son in banishment was redeemed from the sentence, if he killed his banished father. And in Homer’s time there were a sort of pirates who professed robbing, and did account it honourable.³ But the great prevarications of the laws of nature were in the first commandment.⁴ When the tradition concerning God was derived by a long line, and there were no visible remonstrances

¹ *Τινὰ τῶν ἰθὺν ἔξηγγρίωνται*, dixit Porphyrius.

² *De Rep. lib. i. c. 4.*

³ *Scholiast. in Hom. Odys. τ. Vide etiam A. Gel. lib. xi. c. 18.*

⁴ *Vide Just. Mart. Dial. Tryph.*

of an extraordinary power, they were quickly brought to believe that he whom they saw not was not at all, especially being prompted to it by pride, tyranny, and a loose imperious spirit. Others fell to low opinions concerning God, and made such as they list of their own; and they were like to be strange gods which were of man's making. When man either maliciously or carelessly became unreasonable in the things that concerned God, God was pleased to 'give him over to a reprobate mind,' that is, an unreasonable understanding, and false principles concerning himself and his neighbour, that his sin against the natural law might become its own punishment, by discomposing his natural happiness. Atheism and idolatry brought in all unnatural lusts, and many unreasonable injustices. And this we learn from St. Paul: 'As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;' ¹ that is, incongruities towards the end of their creation; and so they became 'full of unrighteousness, lust, covetousness, malice, envy, strife, and murder, disobedient to parents, breakers of covenants, unnatural in their affections,' and in their passions; and all this was the consequent of breaking the first natural law; 'they changed the truth of God into a lie: for this cause God gave them up unto vile affections.'²

21. Now God, who takes more care for the good of man than man does for his own, did not only imprint these laws in the hearts and understandings of man, but did also take care to make this

¹ Rom. i. 28, &c.

² Ver. 25, 26.

light shine clear enough to walk by, by adopting some instances of the natural laws into religion. Thus the law against murder became a part of religion in the time of Noah; and some other things were then added, concerning worshipping God, against idolatry, and against unnatural and impure mixtures. Sometimes God superadded judgments, as upon the twenty-three thousand Israelites for fornication. For although these punishments were not threatened to the crime in the sanction and expression of any definite law, and it could not naturally arrive to it by its inordination; yet it was as agreeable to the divine justice to inflict it, as to inflict the pains of hell upon evil livers, who yet had not any revelation of such intolerable danger. For it was sufficient that God had made such crimes to be against their very nature; and they who will do violence to their nature, to do themselves hurt, and to displease God, deserve to lose the title to all those good things which God was pleased to design for man's final condition. And because it grew habitual, customary, and of innocent reputation, it pleased God to call this precept out of the darkness, whither their evil customs and false discourses had put it; and by such an extra-regular, but very signal, punishment to remind them, that the natural permissions of concubinate were confined to the ends of mankind, and were hallowed only by the faith and the design of marriage. And this was signified by St. Paul in these words, 'They that sin without the law, shall also perish without the law;'¹ that is, by such judgments as God hath in-

¹ Rom. ii. 12.

flicted on evil livers in several periods of the world, irregularly indeed, not signified in kind, but yet sent into the world with designs of a great mercy, that the ignorances and prevarications and partial abolitions of the natural law might be cured and restored, and by the dispersion of prejudices the state of natural reason be redintegrate.

22. Whatsoever was besides this, was accidental and emergent. Such as were the discourses of wise men, which God raised up in several countries and ages, as Job, and Eliphaz, and Bildad, and those of the families of the patriarchs dispersed into several countries; and constant tradition in some noble and more eminent descents. And yet all this was so little and imperfect, not in itself, but in respect of the thick cloud man had drawn before his understanding, that darkness covered the face of the earth in a great proportion. Almost all the world were idolaters: and when they had broken the first of the natural laws, the breach of the other was not only naturally consequent, but also by divine judgment it descended infallibly. And yet God, pitying mankind, did not only still continue the former remedies, and added blessings, 'giving them fruitful seasons, and filling their hearts with food and gladness,' so leaving the nations without excuse; but also made a very noble change in the world. For having chosen an excellent family, the fathers of which lived exactly according to the natural law, and with observation of those few superadded precepts, in which God did specificate their prime duty; and having swelled that family to a great nation, and given them possession of an excellent land, which God took from seven nations, because they were egregious viola-

tors of the natural law ; he was pleased to make a very great restitution and declaration of the natural law in many instances of religion and justice, which he framed into positive precepts, and adopted them into the family of the first original instances, making them as necessary in the particulars as they were in the primary obligation. But the instances were such, whereof some did relate only to the present constitution of the commonwealth ; others to such universal contracts which obliged all the world, by reason of the equal necessity of all mankind, to admit them. And these he himself wrote on tables of stone, and dressed up their nation into a body politic by an excellent system of politic laws, and adorned it with a rare religion ; and left this nation as a piece of leaven in a mass of dough, not only to do honour to God, and happiness to themselves, by those instruments which he had now very much explicated, but also to transmit the same reasonable propositions into other nations. And he therefore multiplied them to a great necessity of a dispersion, that they might serve the ends of God and of the natural law by their ambulatory life, and their numerous disseminations. And this was it which St. Paul affirms, ‘ The law was added because of transgression : ’¹ meaning, that because men did transgress the natural, God brought Moses’s law into the world, to be as a strand to the inundation of impiety. And thus the world stood, till the fulness of time was come : for so we are taught by the apostle, ‘ The law was added because of transgression ; ’ but the date of

¹ Gal. iii. 19.

this was to expire at a certain period, it was added to serve but 'till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.'

23. For because Moses's law was but an imperfect explication of the natural; there being divers parts of the three laws of nature not at all explicated by that covenant, not the religion of prayers, not the reasonableness of temperance and sobriety in opinion and diet, and in the more noble instances of humanity and doing benefit, it was so short, that, as St. Paul says, 'The law could not make the comers thereunto perfect;' and, which was most of all considerable, it was confined to a nation, and the other parts of mankind had made so little use of the records of that nation, that all the world was placed in 'darkness, and sate in the shadow of death:' therefore it was that in great mercy God sent his Son, 'a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of the people Israel;' to instruct those, and consummate these; that the imperfection of the one, and the mere darkness of the other, might be illustrated by the Sun of Righteousness. And this was by restoring the light of nature, (which they by evil customs and false principles and evil laws had obscured,) by restoring man to the liberty of his spirit, by freeing him from the slavery of sin; under which they were so lost and oppressed, that all their discourses and conclusions, some of their moral philosophy, and all their habitual practices, were but servants of sin, and made to co-operate to that end, not which God intended as perfective of human nature, but which the devil and vicious persons superinduced to serve little ends and irregular, and to destroy the greater.

24. For certain it is, Christianity is nothing else but the most perfect design that ever was to make a man be happy in his whole capacity : and as the law was to the Jews, so was philosophy to the Gentiles, a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, to teach them the rudiments of happiness, and the first and lowest things of reason ; that when Christ was come, all mankind might become perfect ; that is, be made regular in their appetites, wise in their understandings, assisted in their duties, directed to and instructed in their great ends. And this is that which the apostle calls ‘ being made perfect in Christ Jesus,’ perfect in all the intendments of nature, and in all the designs of God. And this was brought to pass by discovering, and restoring, and improving the law of nature, and by turning it all into religion.

25. For the natural law being a sufficient and a proportionate instrument and means to bring a man to the end designed in his creation, and this law being eternal and unalterable, (for it ought to be as lasting and as unchangeable as nature itself, so long as it was capable of a law,) it was not imaginable that the body of any law should make a new morality, new rules, and general proportions, either of justice, or religion, or temperance, or felicity ; the essential parts of all these consisting in natural proportions and means towards the consummation of man’s last end, which was first intended, and is always the same. It is as if there were a new truth in an essential and a necessary proposition. For although the instances may vary, there can be no new justice, no new temperance, no new relations, proper and natural relations and intercourses, between God and us, but what always were

praises and prayers, in adoration and honour, and in the symbolical expressions of God's glory, and our needs.

26. Hence it comes that that which is the most obvious and notorious appellative of the law of nature (that is, 'a law written in our hearts') was also recounted as one of the glories and excellencies of Christianity. Plutarch saying, that "kings ought to be governed by laws," explains himself, that this law must be "a word, not written in books and tables, but dwelling in the mind; a living rule, the interior guide of their manners, and monitor of their life." And this was the same which St. Paul expresses to be the guide of the Gentiles, that is, of all men naturally: 'The Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law; which shows the work of the law written in their hearts.'¹ And that we may see it was the law of nature that returned in the sanctions of Christianity, God declares that in the constitution of this law he would take no other course than at first; that is, he would write them in the hearts of men: indeed with a new style, with a quill taken from the wings of the Holy Dove; the Spirit of God was to be the great engraver and the scribe of the new covenant, but the hearts of men should be the tables. For, 'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them: and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more:'² that is, I will provide a means

¹ Rom. ii. 14, 15.

² Heb. x. 16, 17.

to expiate all the iniquities of man, and restore him to the condition of his first creation, putting him into the same order towards felicity which I first designed to him, and that also by the same instruments. Now I consider, that the Spirit of God took very great care, that all the records of the law of Jesus should be carefully kept and transmitted to posterity in books and sermons; which being an act of providence and mercy, was a provision lest they should be lost or mistaken, as they were formerly, when God wrote some of them in tables of stone for the use of the sons of Israel, and all of them in the first tables of nature with the finger of creation, as now he did in the new creature by the finger of the Spirit. But then writing them in the tables of our minds, (besides the other,) can mean nothing but placing them there where they were before, and from whence we blotted them by the mixtures of impure principles and discourses. But I descend to particular and more minute considerations.

27. The laws of nature either are bands of religion, justice, or sobriety. Now, I consider, concerning religion, that whenever God hath made any particular precepts to a family, as to Abraham's or to a single person, as to the man of Judah prophesying against the altar of Bethel, or to a nation, as to the Jews at Sinai, or to all mankind, as to the world descending from Noah; it was nothing else but a trial or an instance of our obedience, a particular prosecution of the law of nature, whereby we are obliged to do honour to God, which was to be done by such expressions as are natural intercourses between God and us, or such as he hath made to be so. Now, in Christianity, we are

wholly left to that manner of prosecuting this first natural law which is natural and proportionable to the nature of the thing, which the holy Jesus calls 'worshipping God in spirit and truth.' 'In spirit,' that is, with our souls heartily and devoutly, so as to exclude hypocrisy and indifferency; and, 'in truth,' that is, without a lie, without vain imaginations and fantastic resemblances of him, which were introduced by the evil customs of the Gentiles; and without such false guises and absurd indecencies, which, as they are contrary to man's reason, so are they contrary to the glory and reputation of God; such as was that universal custom of sacrificing in man's blood,¹ and offering festival lusts and impurities in the solemnities of their religion: for these being against the purpose and design of God, and against right reason, are a lie, and enemies to the truth of a natural and proper religion. The holy Jesus only commanded us to pray often, and to praise God, to speak honour of his name, not to use it lightly and vainly; to believe him, to revere the instruments and ministers of religion, to ask for what we need, to put our trust in God, to worship him, to obey him, and to love him: for all these are but the expressions of love. And this is all Christ spake concerning the first natural law, the law of religion. For, concerning the ceremonies or sacraments which he instituted, they are but few; and they become matter of duty but by accident, as being instruments and rites of consigning those effects and mercies which God sent to the world by the means of this law, and relate rather to the contract and stipulation

¹ Polyd. Vir. de Invent. lib. v. c. 8.

which Christ made for us, than to the natural order between duty and felicity.

28. Now, all these are nothing but what we are taught by natural reason, that is, what God enabled us to understand to be fit instruments of intercourse between God and us, and what was practised and taught by sober men in all ages and all nations, whose records we have received, (as I shall remark at the margin of the several precepts.) For to make these appear certainly and naturally necessary, there was no more requisite, but that man should know there was a God; that is, an Eternal Being, which gave him all he had or was; and to know what himself was; that is, indigent and necessitous of himself, needing help of all the creatures, exposed to accidents and calamity, and defensible no ways but by the same hand that made him; creation and conservation, in the philosophy of all the world, being but the same act continuing and flowing on him from an instant to duration, as a line from its mathematical point. And for this God took sufficient care; for he conversed with man in the very first in such clear and certain perceptible transaction, that a man could as certainly know that God was, as that man was. And in no age of the world hath he left himself without witness, but he hath given such testimonies of himself as were sufficient; for they did actually persuade all nations, barbarous and civil, into the belief of a God.¹ And it is but a nicety to consi-

¹ Maxim. Tyr. Dissert. Ταῦτα ὁ Ἕλλην λέγει, καὶ ὁ βάρβαρος λέγει, καὶ ὁ ἡπειρώτης, καὶ ὁ θαλάττιος, καὶ ὁ σοφός, καὶ ὁ ἀσοφός.—
“These things are equally allowed by the Greek and the barbarian, by the inhabitants of continents and islands, by the wise and by the unwise.”

sider whether or no that proposition can be naturally demonstrated. For it was sufficient to all God's purposes and to all man's, that the proposition was actually believed; the instances were therefore sufficient to make faith, because they did it. And a man may remove himself so far from all the degrees of aptness to believe a proposition, that nothing shall make them join. For, if there were a sect of witty men, that durst not believe their senses, because they thought them fallible; it is no wonder if some men should think every reason reprovably. But, in such cases, demonstration is a relative term, and signifies every probation, greater or lesser, which does actually make faith in any proposition. And in this God hath never been deficient, but hath to all men, that believe him, given sufficient to confirm them; to those few that believed not, sufficient to reprove them.

29. Now, in all these actions of religion, which are naturally consequent to this belief, there is no scruple, but in the instance of faith, which is presented to be an infused grace, an immission from God, and that for its object it hath principles supernatural, that is, naturally incredible; and therefore faith is supposed a grace above the greatest strength of reason.¹ But in this I consider, that if we look into all the sermons of Christ, we shall not easily find any doctrine, except that of the resurrection, that in any sense troubles natural philosophy. (For I do not think those mystical expressions of plain truths, such as are, 'being born again, eating the flesh of the Son of man, being in the Father, and the Father in him,' to be

¹ Apud Lactant. lib. vii. c. 23.

exceptions in this assertion.) And although some Gentiles did believe and deliver that article, and particularly Chrysippus, and the Thracians, (as Mela and Solinus report of them,) yet they could not naturally discourse themselves into it, but had it from the imperfect report and opinion of some Jews that dwelt among them. And it was certainly a revelation or a proposition sent into the world by God. But then the believing it, is so far from being above or against nature, that there is nothing in the world more reasonable than to believe any thing which God tells us, or which is told us by a man sent from God with mighty demonstration of his power and veracity. Naturally our bodies cannot rise, that is, there is no natural agent or natural cause sufficient to produce that effect : but this is an effect of a divine power ; and he hath but a little stock of natural reason, who cannot conclude that the same power which made us out of nothing, can also restore us to the same condition as well and easily from dust and ashes certainly, as from mere nothing. And in this, and in all the like cases, faith is a submission of the understanding to the word of God, and is nothing else but a confessing that God is truth, and that he is omnipotent ; that is, can do what he will, and he will when he hath once said it. And we are now as ignorant of the essence and nature of forms, and of that which substantially distinguishes man from man, or an angel from an angel, as we were of the greatest article of our religion before it was revealed ; and we shall remain ignorant for ever of many natural things, unless they be revealed : and, unless we know all the secrets of philosophy, the mysteries of nature, and the rules and

propositions of all things and all creatures, we are fools, if we say that what we call an article of faith, I mean truly such, is against natural reason. It may be indeed as much against our natural reasonings, as those reasonings are against truth. But if we remember how great an ignorance dwells upon us all, it will be found the most reasonable thing in the world, only to inquire whether God hath revealed any such proposition; and then, not to say, *It is against natural reason, and therefore an article of faith; but, I am told a truth which I knew not till now, and so my reason is become instructed into a new proposition.* And, although Christ hath given us no new moral precepts, but such as were essentially and naturally reasonable in order to the end of man's creation; yet we may easily suppose him to teach us many a new truth which we knew not, and to explicate to us many particulars of that estate which God designed for man in his first production, but yet did not then declare to him, and to furnish him with new revelations, and to signify the greatness of the designed end, to become so many arguments of endearment to secure his duty, that is, indeed, to secure his happiness by the infallible using of the instruments for attaining it.

30. This is all I am to say concerning the precepts of the religion which Jesus taught us: he took off those many superinduced rites which God enjoined to the Jews, and reduced us to the natural religion; that is, to such expressions of duty as all wise men and nations used; save only that he took away the rite of sacrificing beasts, because it was now determined in the great sacrifice of himself, which sufficiently and eternally reconciled all

the world to God.¹ All the other things, as prayer and adoration, and eucharist, and faith in God, of a natural order, and an unalterable expression, and in the nature of the thing there is no other way of address to God than these, no other expression of his glories and our needs; both which must ever be signified.

31. Secondly, concerning the second natural precept, Christian religion hath also added nothing beyond the first obligation, but explained it 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to ye do ye so to them,'² that is the eternal rule of justice; and that binds contracts, keeps promises, affirms truth, makes subjects obedient, and prints just; it gives security to markets and banks, and introduces an equality of condition upon all the world: save only when an inequality is necessary that is, in the relations of government, for the preservation of the common rights of equal titles and possessions,³ that there be some common lord endued with power, who is to be the father of men by an equal provision, that every man's right be secured by that fear which naturally we stand in awe of to him, who can and will punish all unreasonable and unjust violations of property. As concerning this also, the holy Jesus hath added express precept, of paying tribute, and all Cæsars' dues, to Cæsar. In all other particulars it is necessary that the instances and minutes of justice

¹ Just. Mart. Resp. ad Orthodox. ad qu. 83. Tert. adv. Marcion. ii. 2. Maim. More Nevoch. lib. iii. c. 32.

² Hæc sententia sæpissime à Severo imperatore prolata. *μισεῖς, μηδενὶ ποιήσεις*, Tob. iv. 15. Dixit Mimus, "Ab expectes, alteri quod feceris."

³ Singulorum interest, si universi regantur:

appointed by the laws and customs of the several kingdoms and republics. And therefore it was that Christianity so well combined with the government of heathen princes, because whatsoever was naturally just, or declared so by the political power, their religion bound them to observe, making obedience to be a double duty, a duty both of justice and religion.¹ And the societies of Christians growing up from conventicles to assemblies, from assemblies to societies, introduced no change in the government, but by little and little turned the commonwealth into a church; till the world being Christian, and justice also being religion, obedience to princes, observation of laws, honesty in contracts, faithfulness in promises, gratitude to benefactors, simplicity in discourse, and ingenuity in all pretences and transactions, became the characteristics of Christian men, and the word of a Christian the greatest solemnity of stipulation in the world.

32. But concerning the general, I consider, that in two very great instances it was remonstrated that Christianity was the greatest prosecution of natural justice and equality in the whole world. The one was in an election of an apostle into the place of Judas. When there were two equal candidates of the same pretension and capacity, the question was determined by lots, which naturally was the arbitration in questions whose parts were wholly indifferent: and as it was used in all times, so it is to this day used with us in many places, where, lest there be a disagreement concerning the manner of tithing some crea-

¹ *Nec natura potest justo discernere iniquum,
Dividit ut bona diversis, fugienda petendis.*

Hor. lib. i. sat. 3.

tures, and to prevent unequal arts and unjust practices, they are tithed by lot, and their fortuitous passing through the door of their fold. The other is in the cœnobitic life of the first Christians and apostles: they had all things in common; which was that state of nature in which men lived charitably and without injustice, before the distinction of dominions and private rights. But from this manner of life they were soon driven by the public necessity and constitution of affairs.

33. Thirdly, whatsoever else is in the Christian law concerns the natural precept of sobriety, in which there is some variety and some difficulty. In the matter of carnality the holy Jesus did clearly reduce us to the first institution of marriage in paradise, allowing no other mixture but what was first intended in the creation and first sacramental union: and in the instance he so permitted us to the natural law, that he was pleased to mention no instance of forbidden lust, but in general and comprehensive terms of adultery and fornication: in the other, which are still more unnatural, as their names are concealed and hidden in shame and secrecy, we are to have no instructor but the modesty and order of nature.

34. As an instance of this law of sobriety, Christ superadded the whole doctrine of humility, which Moses did not, and which seemed almost to be extinguished in the world: and it is called by St. Paul, *sapere ad sobrietatem*, the reasonableness or wisdom of sobriety. And it is all the reason in the world, that a man should think of himself but just as he is. He is deceived that thinks otherwise, and is a fool. And when we consider that pride makes wars, and causes affronts, and no man loves a proud man, and he loves no man but him-

self and his flatterers, we shall understand that the precept of humility is an excellent art, and a happy instrument towards human felicity. And it is no way contradicted by a natural desire of honour; it only appoints just and reasonable ways of obtaining it. We are not forbidden to receive honour; but to seek it for designs of pride and complacency, or to make it rest in our hearts. But when the hand of virtue receives the honour, and transmits it to God from our own head, the desires of nature are sufficiently satisfied, and nothing of religion contradicted. And it is certain by all the experience of the world, that in every state and order of men, he that is most humble in proportion to that state, is (if all things else be symbolical) the most honoured person. For it is very observable, that when God designed man to a good and happy life, as the natural end of his creation, to verify this, God was pleased to give him objects sufficient and apt to satisfy every appetite:¹ I say, to satisfy it naturally, not to satisfy those extravagancies which might be accidental, and procured by the irregularity either of will or understanding; not to answer him in all that his desires could extend to, but to satisfy the necessity of every appetite: all the desires that God made, not all that man should make. For we see even in those appetites which are common to men and beasts, all the needs of nature and all the ends of creation are served by the taking those proportions of their objects which are ordinate to their end, and which in man we call temperance; (not as much as they naturally can;) such as are mixtures

¹ *Vina sitim sedent, natis Venus alma creandis
 Serviat : hos fines transiliisse nocet.* Virg.
 Aristot. Ethic. lib. vii. c. 7.

of sexes merely for production of their kind, eating and drinking for needs and hunger. And yet God permitted our appetites to be able to extend beyond the limits of the mere natural design, that God, by restraining them, and putting the fetters of laws upon them, might turn natural desires into sobriety, and sobriety into religion, they becoming servants of the commandment. And now we must not call all those swellings of appetites, natural inclination, nor the satisfaction of such tumours and excrescences any part of natural felicities: but that which does just co-operate to those ends which perfect human nature in order to its proper end. For the appetites of meat, and drink, and pleasures are but intermedial and instrumental to that end, and are not made for themselves, but first for the end, and then to serve God in the instances of obedience. And just so is the natural desire of honour intended to be a spur to virtue: (for to virtue only it is naturally consequent, or to natural and political superiority:) but to desire it beyond or besides the limit, is the swelling and the disease of the desire. And we can take no rule for its perfect value, but by the strict limits of the natural end, or the superinduced end of religion in positive restraints.

35. According to this discourse we may best understand, that even the severest precepts of the Christian law are very consonant to nature and the first laws of mankind. Such as the precept of self-denial, which is nothing else but a confining the appetites within the limits of nature: for there they are permitted, (except when some greater purpose is to be served than the present answering the particular desire:) and whatsoever is beyond it is *not in the natural order to felicity*; it is no better

than an itch, which must be scratched and satisfied, but it is unnatural. But for martyrdom itself, quitting our goods, losing lands, or any temporal interest, they are now become as reasonable in the present constitution of the world, as taking unpleasant potions, and suffering a member to be cauterized, in sickness or disease. And we see that death is naturally a less evil than a continual torment, and by some not so resented as a great disgrace; and some persons have chosen it for sanctuary and remedy. And therefore much rather shall it be accounted prudent and reasonable, and agreeable to the most perfect desires of nature, to exchange an house for an hundred, a friend for a patron, a short affliction for a lasting joy, and a temporal death for an eternal life. For so the question is stated to us by him that understands it best. True it is, that the suffering of losses, afflictions, and death, is naturally an evil, and therefore no part of a natural precept, or prime injunction. But when, God having commanded instances of religion, man will not suffer us to obey God, or will not suffer us to live; then the question is, Which is most agreeable to the most perfect and reasonable desires of nature, to obey God, or to obey man? to fear God, or to fear man? to preserve our bodies, or to preserve our souls? to secure a few years of uncertain and troublesome duration, or an eternity of a very glorious condition? Some men reasonably enough choose to die for considerations lower than that of a happy eternity: therefore death is not such an evil, but that it may in some cases be desired and reasonably chosen, and in some be recompensed at the highest rate of a natural value. And if by accident we fall into an estate in which of necessity one evil or another

must be suffered, certainly nothing is more naturally reasonable and eligible than to choose the least evil: and when there are two good things propounded to our choice, both which cannot be possessed, nothing is more certainly the object of a prudent choice than the greater good. And therefore when once we understand the question of suffering, and self-denial, and martyrdom, in this sense, as all Christians do, and all wise men do, and all sects of men do in their several persuasions, it is but remembering, that to live happily after this life is more intended to us by God, and is more perfective of human nature, than to live here with all the prosperity which this state affords: and it will evidently follow, that when violent men will not let us enter into that condition by the ways of nature and prime intendment, that is, of natural religion, justice and sobriety, it is made in that case, and upon that supposition, certainly, naturally and infallibly reasonable to secure the perfective and principal design of our felicity, though it be by instruments which are as unpleasant to our senses as are the instruments of our restitution to health; since both one and the other in the present conjunction and state of affairs are most proportionable to reason, because they are so to the present necessity; not primarily intended to us by God, but superinduced by evil accidents and the violence of men. And we not only find that Socrates suffered death in the attestation of God, though he flattered and discoursed himself into the belief of an immortal reward, *De industria consultæ æquanimittatis, non de fiducia compertæ veritatis*, (as Tertullian says of him,) but we also find, that all men that believed the immortality of the soul firmly and unmovably,

made no scruple of exchanging their life for the preservation of virtue with the interest of their great hope, for honour sometimes, and oftentimes for their country.

36. Thus the holy Jesus perfected and restored the natural law, and drew it into a system of propositions, and made them to become of the family of religion. For God is so zealous to have man attain to the end to which he first designed him, that those things which he hath put in the natural order to attain that end, he hath bound fast upon us, not only by the order of things, by which it was that he that prevaricated did naturally fall short of felicity; but also by bands of religion, he hath now made himself a party and an enemy to those that will not be happy. Of old, religion was but one of the natural laws, and the instances of religion were distinct from the discourses of philosophy. Now all the law of nature is adopted into religion, and by our love and duty to God we are tied to do all that is reason; and the parts of our religion are but pursuances of the natural relation between God and us: and beyond all this, our natural condition is in all senses improved by the consequents and adherences of this religion. For although nature and grace are opposite,—that is, nature depraved by evil habits, by ignorance and ungodly customs, is contrary to grace, that is, to nature restored by the gospel, engaged to regular living by new revelations, and assisted by the Spirit,—yet it is observable, that the law of nature and the law of grace are never opposed. ‘There is a law of our members,’ saith St. Paul, that is, an

¹ Rom. vii. 23.

evil necessity introduced into our appetites by perpetual evil customs, examples, and traditions of vanity ; and there is a law of sin, that answers to this : and they differ only as inclination and habit, vicious desires and vicious practices. But then contrary to these are, first, ‘ a law of my mind,’¹ which is the law of nature and right reason ; and then the law of grace ; that is, of Jesus Christ, who perfected and restored the first law, and by assistances reduced it into a law of holy living. And these two differ as the other, the one is in order to the other, as imperfection and growing degrees and capacities are to perfection and consummation. The law of the mind had been so raised and obliterated, and we, by some means or other, so disabled from observing it exactly, that until it was turned into the law of grace, (which is a law of pardoning infirmities, and assisting us in our choices and elections,) we were in a state of deficiency from the perfective state of man, to which God intended us.

37. Now, although God always designed man to the same state which he hath now revealed by Jesus Christ, yet he told him not of it, and his permissions and licenses were then greater, and the law itself lay closer folded up in the compact body of necessary propositions, in order to so much of his end as was known, or could be supposed. But now, according to the extension of the revelation, the law itself is made wider, that is, more explicit ; and natural reason is thrust forward into discourses of charity and benefit, and we tied to do very much good to others, and tied to co-operate to each other’s felicity.

¹ Rom. vii. 23.

38. That the law of charity is a law of nature, needs no other argument but the consideration of the first constitution of man. The first instances of justice, or intercourse of man with a second or third person, were to such persons towards whom he had the greatest endearments of affection in the world, a wife and children; and justice and charity at first was the same thing. And it hath obtained in ages far removed from the first, that charity is called righteousness;¹ ‘He hath dispersed and given to the poor; his righteousness remaineth for ever.’² And it is certain, Adam could not in any instance be unjust, but he must in the same also be uncharitable; the band of his first justice [being the ties of love, and all having commenced in love. And our blessed Lord, restoring all to the intention of the first perfection, expresses it to the same sense, as I formerly observed; justice to our neighbour, is loving him as ourselves. For, since justice obliges us to do as we would be done to, as the irascible faculty restrains us from doing evil, for fear of receiving evil; so the concupiscible obliges us to charity, that ourselves may receive good.

39. I shall say nothing concerning the reasonableness of this precept, but that it concurs rarely with the first reasonable appetite of man, of being like God. *Deus est mortali juvare mortalem, atque hæc est ad æternitatem via,*³ said Pliny; and, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive,’ said our blessed Saviour. And therefore the commandment of charity in all its parts is a design, not only to reconcile

¹ ‘Ο ἄνθρωπος ἐνεργητικὸς πέφυκε.—M. Anton. lib. ix.

² Psal. cxii. 9.

³ “It is godly for a mortal to assist a mortal, and this is the way to eternal life.”

the most miserable person to some participation and sense of felicity, but to make the charitable man happy: and whether this be not very agreeable to the desires of an intelligent nature, needs no further inquiry. And Aristotle asking the question, whether a man had more need of friends in prosperity or adversity, makes the case equal: "Οτε γὰρ ἀντυχῆντες δέονται ἑπικηρίας οἱ δὲ ἐντυχῆντες συμβίω, ὥς ἐνποιήσωσιν. " When they are in want, they need assistance; when they are prosperous, they need partners of their felicity, that by communicating their joy to them, it may reflect and double upon their spirits." And certain it is, that there is no greater felicity in the world, than in the content that results from the emanations of charity. And this is that which St. John calls 'the old commandment,' and 'the new commandment.'¹ It was of old,² for it was from the beginning, even in nature, and to the offices of which our very bodies had an organ and a seat; for therefore nature gave to a man bowels and the passion of yearning: but it grew up into religion by parts, and was made perfect, and in that degree appropriate to the law of Jesus Christ. For so the holy Jesus became our lawgiver, and added many new precepts over and

¹ 1 John, ii. 7, 8.

² ————— "Ἀνδρα δ' ὠφελεῖν,
'Αφ' ὧν ἔχοι τε ἐ, δύναιτο, κάλλιστος πόνων.
Sophocl. Oedip.

————— Hoc reges habent
Magnificum et ingens, nulla quod rapiat dies,
Prodesse miseris, supplices fido lare
Protegere ————— Senec. Med.

————— Mollissima corda
Humano generi dare se natura fatetur,
Quæ lacrymas dedit: hæc nostri pars optima sensûs.
Juven. Sat. xv.

above what were in the law of Moses, but not more than was in the law of nature. The reason of both is what I have all this while discoursed of: Christ made a more perfect restitution of the law of nature than Moses did: and so it became the second Adam, to consummate that which began to be less perfect from the prevarication of the first Adam.

40. A particular of the precept of charity is forgiving injuries; and besides that it hath many superinduced benefits by way of blessing and reward, it relies also upon this natural reason, that a pure and a simple revenge does no way restore man towards the felicity which the injury did interrupt. For revenge is a doing a simple evil, and does not in its formality imply reparation. For the mere repeating of our own right is permitted to them that will do it by charitable instruments; and to secure myself or the public against the future by positive inflictions upon the injurious, (if I be not judge myself,) is also within the moderation of an unblameable defence, (unless some accidents or circumstances vary the case,) but forgiving injuries is a separating the malice from the wrong, the transient act from the permanent effect: and it is certain, any act which is passed cannot be rescinded, but the effect may: and if it cannot, it does no way alleviate the evil of the accident, that I draw him that caused it into as great a misery, since every evil happening in the world is the proper object of pity, which is in some sense afflictive: and therefore, unless we become unnatural and without bowels, it is most unreasonable that we should increase our own afflictions by introducing a new misery, and making a new ob-

ject of pity. All the ends of human felicity secured without revenge, for without it we permitted to restore ourselves; and therefore it against natural reason to do an evil that now co-operates toward the proper and perfective end of human nature. And he is a miserable person whose good is the evil of his neighbour: ¹ and that revenges, in many cases does worse than that did the injury; in all cases, as bad. For the first injury was an injustice, to serve an end and an advantage and real benefit, then my revenge which is abstracted, and of a consideration separate and distinct from the reparation, is worse: I do him evil, without doing myself any real good which he did not, for he received advantage by it. But if the first injury was matter of mere malice without advantage, yet it is no worse than revenge for that is just so; and there is as much fantastical pleasure in doing a spite, as in doing revenge. They are both but like the pleasures of eating coals, and toads, and vipers. And certain it is, if a man upon his private stock could be permitted to revenge, the evil would be immortal. And it is rarely well discoursed by Tyndarus in Euripides “If the angry wife shall kill her husband, the son shall revenge his father’s death, and kill his mother and then the brother shall kill his mother’s murderer, and he also will meet with an avenger for killing his brother.”

Πέρας δε ποῖ κακῶν προδήσεται; ²

¹ Ὁ τιμωρῶν τῇ προῦ πύρξαντος ἀδικώτερος.

Maxim. Tyrus in dissert. An referenda sit injuria

“Ἀπαντα τὰ ζῶα ἔστι μακαριώτατα,

Καὶ νῦν ἔχοντα μᾶλλον ἀνθρώπων πολὺ, &c.—Menand.

² Eurip. Orest.

What end shall there be to such inhuman and sad accidents? if in this there be injustice, it is against natural reason; and if it be evil, and disorders the felicity and security of society, it is also against natural reason. But if it be just, it is a strange justice that is made up of so many inhumanities.

41. And now if any man pretends specially to reason, to the ordinate desires and perfections of nature, and the sober discourses of philosophy, here is in Christianity, and nowhere else, enough to satisfy and inform his reason, to perfect his nature, and to reduce to act all the propositions of an intelligent and wise spirit. And the Holy Ghost is promised and given in our religion to be an eternal band to keep our reason from returning to the darkness of the old creation, and to promote the ends of our natural and proper felicity. For it is not a vain thing that St. Paul reckons helps, and governments, and healings to be fruits of the Spirit. For since the two greatest blessings of the world, personal and political, consist, that in health, this in government,¹ and the ends of human felicity are served in nothing greater for the present interval than in these two; Christ did not only enjoin rare prescriptions of health, such as are fasting, temperance, chastity, and sobriety, and all the great endearments of government, (and unless they be sacredly observed, man is infinitely miserable,) but also hath given his Spirit, that is, extraordinary aids to the promoting of these two, and facilitating the work of nature: that (as St. Paul says, at the end of a

¹ Nihil est illi principi Deo qui omnem hunc mundum regit (quod quidem in terris fiat) acceptius, quàm concilia cœtusque hominum jure sociati, quæ civitates appellantur.—Cicer. Som. Sciniam

discourse to this very purpose) ‘the excellency the power may be of God, and not of us.’¹

42. I shall add nothing but this single consideration. God said to the children of Israel, ‘Ye are a royal priesthood,’² a kingdom of priests. What was therefore true, because God reigned by priests, and ‘the priests’ lips did then present knowledge, and the people were to receive the law from their mouths:’ for God having by laws of his own established religion and the republic, did govern by the rule of the law, and the ministry of priests. The priests said, ‘Thus saith the Lord, and the people obeyed. And these very words spoken to the Christian church: ‘Ye are a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him that hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:’ that is, God reigns over all Christendom just as he did over the Jews. He hath now given to them and restored respectively all the reasonable laws which are in order to all good civil, personal, economical, and political, that if men will suffer Christian religion to do its last intention, if men will live according to it, there need be no other coercion of laws, or power of the sword. The laws of God revealed by Christ are sufficient to make all societies of men happy; and over good men God reigns by his ministers, by preaching of the word. And this was most evident in the three first ages of the church, in which Christian societies were, for all their proper intercourse, perfectly guided, not by the authority or compulsion, but by the sermons of their spirit

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 7.

² 1 Pet. ii. 9.

guides : insomuch, that St. Paul sharply reprehends the Corinthians, ‘ brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers ;’ as if he had said, ye will not suffer Christ to be your judge, and his law to be your rule. Which, indeed, was a great fault among them, not only because they had so excellent a law, so clearly described, (or, where they might doubt, they had infallible interpreters,) so reasonable and profitable, so evidently concurring to their mutual felicity ; but also, because God did design Jesus to be their king, to reign over them by spiritual regiment, as himself did over the Jews, till they chose a king. And when the emperors became Christian, the case was no otherwise altered, but that the princes themselves, submitting to Christ’s yoke, were (as all other Christians are) for their proportion to be governed by the royal priesthood ; that is, by the word preached by apostolical persons ; the political interest remaining as before, save that by being submitted to the laws of Christ it received this advantage, that all justice was turned to be religion, and became necessary, and bound upon the conscience by divinity. And when it happens that a kingdom is converted to Christianity, the commonwealth is made a church, and Gentile priests are Christian bishops, and the subjects of the kingdom are servants of Christ, the religion of the nation is turned Christian, and the law of the nation made a part of the religion : there is no change of government, but that Christ is made king, and the temporal power is his substitute, and is to promote the interest of obedience to him, as before he did to Christ’s enemy ; Christ having left his ministers as leiger ambassadors, to signify

and publish the laws of Jesus, 'to pray all in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God:' so that over the obedient Christ wholly reigns by his ministers publishing his laws; over the disobedient, by the prince, also, putting those laws in execution. And in this sense it is that St. Paul says, *bonis lex non est posita*, to such (who live after the spirit) 'there is no law;' that is, there needs no coercion. But, now, if we reject God from reigning over us, and say, like the people in the gospel, *Nolumus hunc regnare*, 'We will not have him to reign over us,' by the ministry of his word, by the empire of the royal priesthood, then we return to the condition of heathens, and persons sitting in darkness; then God hath armed the temporal power with a sword to cut us off. If we obey not God speaking by his ministers,—that is, if we live not according to the excellent laws of Christianity, that is, holily, soberly, and justly in all our relations,—he hath placed three swords against us; the sword of the Spirit against the unholy and irreligious, the sword of natural and supervening infelicities upon the intemperate and unsober, and the sword of kings against the unjust; to remonstrate the excellency of Christianity, and how certainly it leads to all the felicity of man, because every transgression of this law, according to its proportion, makes men unhappy and unfortunate.

43. What effect this discourse may have I know not; I intended it to do honour to Christianity, and to represent it to be the best religion in the world, and the conjugation of all excellent things that were in any religion, or in any philosophy, or in any discourses. For 'whatsoever was honest, whatsoever was noble, whatsoever was wise, what-

soever was of good report, if there be any praise, if there be any virtue,'¹ it is in Christianity. For even to follow all these instances of excellency, is a precept of Christianity. And methinks, they that pretend to reason cannot more reasonably endear themselves to the reputation of reason, than by endearing their reason to Christianity; the conclusions and belief of which is the most reasonable and perfect, the most excellent design, and complying with the noblest and most proper ends of man. And if this gate may suffice to invite such persons into the recesses of the religion, then I shall tell them that I have dressed it in the ensuing books with some variety: and as the nature of the religion is, some parts whereof are apt to satisfy our discourse, some to move our affections, and yet all of this to relate to practice; so is the design of the following pages. For some men are wholly made up of passion, and their very religion is but passion put into the family and society of holy purposes: and for those I have prepared considerations upon the special parts of the life of the holy Jesus. And yet there also are some things mingled in the least severe and most affectionate parts which may help to answer a question, and appease a scruple, and may give rule for determination of many cases of conscience. For I have so ordered the considerations, that they spend not themselves in mere affections and ineffective passions; but they are made doctrinal, and little repositories of duty. But, because of the variety of men's spirits and of men's necessities, it was necessary I should interpose some

¹ Phil iv. 8.

practical discourses more severe. For it is but a sad thought to consider, that piety and books of devotion are counted but entertainment for little understandings and softer spirits. And, although there is much fault in such imperious minds, that they will not distinguish the weakness of the writers from the reasonableness and wisdom of the religion; yet I cannot but think the books themselves are in a large degree the occasion of so great indevotion; because they are (some few excepted) represented naked in the conclusions of spiritual life, without or art or learning, and made apt for persons who can do nothing but believe and love; not for them that can consider and love. And it is not well, that, since nothing is more reasonable and excellent in all perfections spiritual than the doctrines of the Spirit or holy life, yet nothing is offered to us so unlearnedly as this is, so miserable and empty of all its own intellectual perfections. If I could, I would have had it otherwise in the present books. For, since the understanding is not an idle faculty in a spiritual life, but hugely operative to all excellent and reasonable choices; it were very fit that this faculty were also entertained by those discourses which God intended as instruments of hallowing it, as he intended it towards the sanctification of the whole man. For want of it, busy and active men entertain themselves with notions infinitely unsatisfying and unprofitable: but in the meantime they are not so wise. For concerning those that study unprofitable notions, and neglect not only that which is wisest, but that also which is of most real advantage, I cannot but think as Aristotle did of Thales and Anaxagoras, that “they may be learned, but they

are not wise ; or wise, but not prudent, when they are ignorant of such things as are profitable to them. For, suppose they know the wonders of nature, and the subtleties of metaphysics, and operations mathematical ; yet they cannot be prudent, who spend themselves wholly upon unprofitable and ineffectual contemplations.”¹ He is truly wise that knows best to promote the best end, that which he is bound to desire, and is happy if he obtains, and miserable if he misses : and that is the end of a happy eternity, which is obtained by the only means of living according to the purposes of God, and the prime intentions of nature : natural and prime reason being now all one with the Christian religion. But then I shall only observe, that this part of wisdom, and the excellency of its secret and deep reason, is not to be discerned but by experience : the propositions of this philosophy being (as in many other) empirical, and best found out by observation of real and material events. So that I may say of spiritual learning, as Quintilian said of some of Plato’s books : *Nam Plato, cum in aliis quibusdam, tum præcipue in Timæo, nè intelligi quidem, nisi ab iis qui hanc quoque partem disciplinæ [musicæ] diligenter perceperint, potest* : the secrets of the kingdom of heaven are not understood truly and thoroughly but by the sons of the kingdom : and by them too in several degrees, and to various purposes : but to evil persons the whole system of this wisdom is insipid and flat, dull as the foot of a rock, and unlearned as the elements of our mother-tongue. But so are mathematics to a Scythian boor, and music to a camel.

¹ Arist. lib. vi. Eth. cap. 7.

44. But I consider, that the wisest persons, and those who know how to value and entertain the more noble faculties of their soul, and their precious hours, take more pleasure in reading the productions of those old wise spirits, who preserved natural reason and religion in the midst of heathen darkness, (such as are Homer, Euripides, Orpheus, Pindar, and Anacreon, Æchylus and Menander, and all the Greek poets; Plutarch and Polybius, Xenophon, and all those other excellent persons of both faculties,—whose choicest dictates are collected by Stobæus; Plato and his scholars, Aristotle, and after him Porphyry, and all his other disciples, Pythagoras and his, especially Hierocles; all the old academics and stoics within the Roman schools,) take more pleasure, I say, in reading these, than the triflings of many of the later schoolmen, who promoted a petty interest of a family, or an unlearned opinion, with great earnestness, but added nothing to Christianity but trouble, scruple, and vexation. And from hence, I hope, that they may the rather be invited to love and consider the rare documents of Christianity, which certainly is the great treasure-house of those excellent, moral, and perfective discourses, which with much pains and greater pleasure we find respersed and thinly scattered in all the Greek and Roman poets, historians, and philosophers. But because I have observed, that there are some principles entertained into the persuasions of men, which are the seeds of evil life; such as are, the doctrine of late repentance, the mistakes of the definition of the sins of infirmity, the evil understanding of the consequents and nature of original sin, the sufficiency of contrition in order to pardon, the efficacy

of the rites of Christianity without the necessity of moral adherences, the nature of faith, and many other; I was diligent to remark such doctrines, and to pare off the mistakes so far that they hinder not piety, and yet, as near as I could, without engaging in any question in which the very life of Christianity is not concerned.

*Hæc sum profatus—haud ambagibus
Implicita, sed quæ regulis æqui et boni
Suffulta, rudibus pariter et doctis patent.¹*

My great purpose is to advance the necessity, and to declare the manner and parts of a good life,² and to invite some persons to the consideration of all the parts of it, by intermixing something of pleasure with the use; others by such parts as will better entertain their spirits than a romance. I have followed the design of Scripture, and have given milk for babes, and for stronger men stronger meat; and in all I have despised my own reputation, by so striving to make it useful, that I was less careful to make it strict in retired senses, and embossed with unnecessary, but graceful ornaments. I pray God this may go forth into a blessing to all that shall use it, and reflect blessings upon me all the way, that my spark may grow greater by kindling my brother's taper, and God may be glorified in us both. If the reader shall receive no benefit, yet I intended him one, and I

¹ What I have spoken, not with doubt involved,
But dictated by rules of right and good,
To minds unlearned, and learned alike appeal."
Polynic. apud Eurip.

² Arist. Ethic. lib. ii.

have laboured, in order to it ; and I shall receive a great recompense for that intention, if he shall please to say this prayer for me, “ that while I have preached to others, I may not become a cast-away.”

AN EXHORTATION

TO THE IMITATION OF THE

LIFE OF CHRIST.

NEVER the person of Jesus Christ was depressed with a load of humble accidents, and shadowed in the darknesses of poverty and sad contingencies, so that the Jews, and the contemporary ages, the Gentiles, and the apostles themselves, at first, could not discern the brightest essence of divinity; as a beauty artificially covered with a thin veil of cypress transmits its excellency to the eye, the more greedy and apprehensive by that imperfect and weak restraint; so was the sanctity and brightness of the life of Jesus glorious in its darknesses, and found confessors and admirers even in the midst of those despites which were done him in the contrariant designs of malice and contrary ambition. Thus the wife of Pilate called him 'that just person;' Pilate pronounced him 'innocent;' Judas said he was 'innocent;' the devil himself called him 'the Holy One of God.' However it might concern any man's mistaken judgment to mislike the purpose of his preaching and spiritual kingdom, and those doctrines which were destructive of their complacencies and carnal securities, yet they could not deny but that he was a Son of God, of exemplary sanctity, of an angelical

chastity, of a life sweet, affable, and complying with human conversation, and as obedient to government as the most humble children of the kingdom. And yet he was Lord of all the world.

2. And certainly very much of this was with a design that he might shine to all the generations and ages of the world, and become a guiding star, and a 'pillar of fire' to us in our journey. For we who believe that Jesus was perfect God and perfect man, do also believe that one minute of his intolerable passion, and every action of his, might have been satisfactory, and enough for the expiation and reconciliation of ten thousand worlds : and God might, upon a less effusion of blood, and a shorter life of merit, if he had pleased, have accepted human nature to pardon and favour : but, that the holy Jesus hath added so many excellent instances of holiness, and so many degrees of passion, and so many kinds of virtues, it is, that he might become an example to us, and reconcile our wills to him, as well as our persons to his heavenly Father.

3. And indeed it will prove but a sad consideration, that one drop of blood might be enough to obtain our pardon, and the treasures of his blood running out till the fountain itself was dry shall not be enough to procure our conformity to him ; that the smallest minute of his expense shall be enough to justify us, and the whole magazine shall not procure our sanctification ; that at a smaller expense God might pardon us, and at a greater we will not imitate him : for therefore ' Christ hath suffered for us,' saith the apostle, ' leaving an example to us, that we might follow his steps.'¹ The

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 21.

least of our wills cost Christ as much as the greatest of our sins. And therefore he calls himself 'the way, the truth, and the life;' that as he redeems our souls from death to life, by becoming life to our persons, so he is the truth to our understanding, and the way to our will and affections, enlightening that, and leading these in the paths of a happy eternity.

4. When the king of Moab was pressed hard by the sons of Isaac, (the Israelites and Edomites,) he took the king of Edom's eldest son, or as some think, his own son, the heir of his kingdom, and offered him as a holocaust upon the wall; and the Edomites presently raised the siege at Kir-haraseth, and went to their own country.¹ The same and much more was God's design, who took not his enemy's, but his own Son, his only-begotten Son, and God himself, and offered him up in sacrifice, to make us leave our perpetual fightings against heaven: and if we still persist, we are hardened beyond the wildnesses of the Arabs and Edomites, and neither are receptive of the impresses of pity nor humanity, who neither have compassion to the suffering of Jesus, nor compliance with the designs of God, nor conformity to the holiness and obedience of our guide. In a dark night, if an *ignis fatuus* do but precede us, the glaring of its lesser flames do so amuse our eyes, that we follow it into rivers and precipices, as if the ray of that false light were designed on purpose to be our path to tread in: and therefore not to follow the glories of the Sun of Righteousness, who indeed leads us over rocks and difficult places, but secures us

¹ 2 Kings, iii. 27.

against the danger, and guides us into safety, is the greatest both indecency and unthankfulness in the world.

5. In the great council of eternity, when God set down the laws, and knit fast the eternal bands of predestination, he made it one of his great purposes to make his Son like us, that we also might be like his holy Son;¹ he, by taking our nature; we, by imitating his holiness. 'God hath predestinated us to be conformable to the image of his Son,'² saith the apostle. For the first in every kind is in nature propounded as the pattern of the rest. And as the sun, the prince of all the bodies of light, and the fire of all warm substances, is the principle, the rule, and the copy which they in their proportions imitate and transcribe, so is the Word incarnate the great example of all the predestinate; for 'he is the first-born among many brethren.' And therefore it was a precept of the apostle, and by his doctrine we understand its meaning, 'Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ'³ The similitude declares the duty. As a garment is composed and made of the same fashion with the body, and is applied to each part in its true figure and commensuration, so should we 'put on Christ,' and imitate the whole body of his sanctity, conforming to every integral part, and express him in our lives; that God seeing our impresses, may know whose image and superscription we bear; and that we may be acknowledged for sons, when we have the air and features and resemblances of our elder brother.⁴

6. In the practice of this duty we may be helped by certain considerations, which are like the pro-

¹ Διὰ Θεομιμησίαν εἰς Θεοπρίαν ἀξιώτερος.—S. Dionys.

² Rom. viii. 29.

³ Rom. xiii. 14.

⁴ Hierocles

portion of so many rewards. For this, according to the nature of all holy exercises, stays not for pay till its work be quite finished; but like music in churches, is pleasure and piety, and salary besides. So is every work of grace full of pleasure in the execution, and is abundantly rewarded, besides the stipend of a glorious eternity.

7. First, I consider that nothing is more honourable than to be like God; and the heathens, worshippers of false deities, grew vicious upon that stock:¹ and we, who have fondnesses of imitation counting a deformity full of honour, if by it we may be like our prince,² (for pleasures were in their height in Capreæ, because Tiberius there wallowed in them; and a wry neck in Nero's court was the mode of gallantry,) might do well to make our imitations prudent and glorious, and, by propounding excellent examples, heighten our faculties to the capacities of an evenness with the best of precedents. He that strives to imitate another, admires him, and confesses his own imperfections: and therefore that our admirations be not flattering, nor our confessions fantastic and impertinent, it were but reasonable to admire him from whom really all perfections do derive, and before whose glories all our imperfections must confess their shame, and needs of reformation. God, by a voice from heaven, and by sixteen generations of miracles and grace, hath attested the holy Jesus to be

¹ Vide Julius Firmic. de Error. prof. Relig.

² *Facere rectè cives suos princeps optimus faciendo docet: cùmque sit imperio magnus, exemplo magis est. Vellei. Paterc.* "A truly good prince teaches his people to do well by doing so himself; and if he is great by authority is greater by example."

the fountain of sanctity, and the 'wonderful Counselor,' and 'the Captain of our sufferings,' an Guide of our manners, by being his beloved in whom he took pleasure and complacency to the height of satisfaction. And if any thing in the world be motive of our affections, or satisfaction to our understandings, what is there in heaven or earth we can desire or imagine beyond a likeness to God, and participation of the divine nature and perfections? And therefore, as when the sun warms every man goes to his work, and warms him with his heat, and is refreshed with his influence and measures his labour with his course, so shall we frame all the actions of our life by his light, who hath shined by an excellent righteousness, that we no more walk in darkness, nor sleep in lethargy, nor run gazing after the lesser and imperfect beauties of the night. It is the weakness of our organ that makes us hold our hand between the sun and us, and yet stand staring upon a meteor as an inflamed jelly. And our judgments are as mistaken, and our appetites are as sottish, if we compare ourselves to ourselves in the courses and designs of perfection any copy but of him, or something less than him, who is the most perfect. And lest we be overcome by his glories too great to behold,

8. Secondly, I consider, that the imitation of the life of Jesus is a duty of that excellency and perfection, that we are helped in it, not only by the assistance of a good and a great example, which possibly might be too great, and scare our endeavours and attempts; but also by its easiness, compliance and proportion to us. For Jesus in his whole conversation with men with a modest virtue, w

like a well-kindled fire fitted with just materials casts a constant heat ;¹ not like an inflamed heap of stubble, glaring with great emissions, and suddenly stooping into the thickness of smoke. His piety was even, constant, unblamable, complying with civil society, without affrightment of precedent, or prodigious instances of action greater than the imitation of men. For if we observe our blessed Saviour in the whole story of his life, although he was without sin, yet the instances of his piety were the actions of a very holy, but of an ordinary life. And we may observe this difference in the story of Jesus from ecclesiastical writings of certain beatified persons, whose life is told rather to amaze us, and to create scruples, than to lead us in the evennesses and serenity of a holy conscience. Such are the prodigious penances of Simeon Stylites, the abstinence of the religious retired into the mountain Nitria; but especially the stories of later saints, in the midst of a declining piety and aged Christendom, where persons are represented holy by way of idea and fancy, if not to promote the interests of a family and institution. But our blessed Saviour, though his eternal union and adherences of love and obedience to his heavenly Father were next to infinite; yet in his external actions, in which only, with the correspondence of the Spirit in those actions, he propounds himself imitable, he did so converse with men, that men after that example might for ever converse with him. We find that

¹ *Admonetur omnis ætas fieri posse quod aliquando factum est. Exempla fiunt quæ jam esse facinora destiterunt. St. Cyprian. "Every age is taught that what has once been may again be. That which has ceased to be in action exists as an example."*

some saints have had excrescences and eruptions of holiness in the instances of uncommanded duties, which in the same particulars we find not in the story of the life of Jesus. John Baptist was a greater mortifier than his Lord was; and some princes have given more money than all Christ's family did, whilst he was alive. But the difference which is observable is, that although some men did some acts of counsel in order to attain that perfection which in Jesus was essential and unalterable, and was not acquired by degrees, and means of danger and difficulty; yet no man ever did his whole duty, save only the holy Jesus. The best of men did sometimes actions not precisely and strictly requisite, and such as were besides the precept; but yet in the greatest flames of their shining piety they prevaricated something of the commandment. They that have done the most things beyond, have also done some things short of their duty. But Jesus, who intended himself the example of piety, did in manners as in the rule of faith, which, because it was propounded to all men, was fitted to every understanding; it was true, necessary, short, easy, and intelligible. So was his rule and his copy fitted not only with excellencies worthy, but with compliances possible to be imitated: of glories so great, that the most early and constant industry must confess its own imperfections; and yet so sweet and humane, that the greatest infirmity, if pious, shall find comfort and encouragement. Thus God gave his children manna from heaven; and though it was excellent, like the food of angels, yet it conformed to every palate, according to that appetite which their several fancies and constitutions did produce.

9. But now, when the example of Jesus is so excellent, that it allures and tempts with its facility and sweetness, and that we are not commanded to imitate a life, whose story tells of ecstasies in prayer, and abstractions of senses, and immaterial transportations, and fastings to the exinanition of spirits, and disabling of all animal operations;¹ but of a life of justice and temperance, of chastity and piety, of charity and devotion; such a life without which human society cannot be conserved, and by which as our irregularities are made regular, so our weaknesses are not upbraided, nor our miseries made a mockery; we find so much reason to address ourselves to a heavenly imitation of so blessed a pattern, that the reasonableness of the thing will be a great argument to chide every degree and minute of neglect. It was a strange and a confident encouragement which Phocion used to a timorous Greek, who was condemned to die with him: "Is it not enough to thee that thou must die with Phocion?" I am sure, he that is most incurious of the issues of his life, is yet willing enough to reign with Jesus, when he looks upon the glories represented without the duty: but it is a very great stupidity and unreasonableness, not to live with him in the imitation of so holy and so prompt a piety. It is glorious to do what he did, and a shame to decline his sufferings, when there was a God to hallow and sanctify the actions, and a man clothed with infirmity to undergo the sharpness of the passion; so that the glory of the person added

¹ Ὡς ἐνχόμενος τοῖς θεοῖς, μετεωρίζη μὲν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς πλέον ἑνδέκα πεχεῖς εἰκάζεσθαι, dixit, Eunapius de Jamblichus. — Eunapius said in Jamblichus, "That one praying to the gods, was as if he had been lifted into the clouds."

excellency to the first, and the tenderness of the person excused not from suffering the latter.

10. Thirdly, Every action of the life of Jesus, as it is imitable by us, is of so excellent merit, that by making up the treasure of grace, it becomes full of assistances to us, and obtains of God grace to enable us to its imitation by way of influence and impetration. For as in the acquisition of habits, the very exercise of the action does produce a facility to the action, and in some proportion becomes the cause of itself; so does every exercise of the life of Christ kindle its own fires, inspires breath into itself, and makes an univocal production of itself in a differing subject. And Jesus becomes the fountain of spiritual life to us, as the prophet Elisha to the dead child. When he stretched his hands upon the child's hands, laid his mouth to his mouth, and formed his posture to the boy, and breathed into him, the spirit returned again into the child at the prayer of Elisha: so, when our lives are formed into the imitation of the life of the holiest Jesus, the Spirit of God returns into us, not only by the efficacy of the imitation, but by the merit and impetration of the actions of Jesus. It is reported in the Bohemian story,¹ that St. Wenceslaus, their king, one winter night, going to his devotions in a remote church, bare-footed, in the snow and sharpness of unequal and pointed ice, his servant Podavivus, who waited upon his master's piety, and endeavoured to imitate his affections, began to faint through the violence of the snow and cold, till the king commanded him to follow him, and set his feet in the same footsteps which his feet should

¹ Histor. Bohem. lib. iv.

mark for him. The servant did so, and either fancied a cure, or found one; for he followed his prince, helped forward with shame and zeal to his imitation, and by the forming footsteps for him in the snow. In the same manner does the blessed Jesus: for since our way is troublesome, obscure, full of objection and danger, apt to be mistaken, and to affright our industry, he commands us to mark his footsteps, to tread where his feet have stood; and not only invites us forward by the argument of his example, but he hath trodden down much of the difficulty, and made the way easier and fit for our feet. For he knows our infirmities, and himself hath felt their experience in all things but in the neighbourhoods of sin: and therefore he hath proportioned a way and a path to our strengths and capacities, and, like Jacob, hath marched softly and in evenness with the children and the cattle, to entertain us by the comforts of his company, and the influences of a perpetual guide.

11. Fourthly, But we must know, that not every thing which Christ did is imitable by us; neither did he, in the work of our redemption, in all things imitate his heavenly Father. For there are some things which are issues of an absolute power, some are expresses of supreme dominion, some are actions of a judge. And therefore Jesus prayed for his enemies, and wept over Jerusalem; when at the same instant his eternal Father laughed them to scorn; for he knew that their day was coming, and himself had decreed their ruin. But it became the holy Jesus to imitate his Father's mercies; for himself was the great instrument of the eternal compassion, and was the instance of mercy: and therefore, in the operation of his Father's design,

every action of his was univocal, and he sheweth the power of his divinity in nothing but in his mercy, and illustrations of faith, by creations of credibility. In the same proportion we follow Jesus, as himself followed his Father: what he abated by the order to his intended design, we abate by the proportions of our strength. For some excellent acts of his were demonstrations of divinity, and an excellent grace poured upon him 'without measure' was their instrument to which proportions, if we should extend our imitities, we should crack our sinews, and break the silver cords, before we could entertain such stances, and support the burden. Jesus fasted forty days and forty nights: but the fastings of our fastings hath been in all ages limited to the term of an artificial day; and in the prescriptions and the Jewish rites, men did not eat or drink meal as soon as the stars shone in the firmament. We never read that Jesus laughed, and that he rejoiced in spirit: but the declensions of our natures cannot bear the weight of a constant grave deportment, without the intervals of merriment and free alacrity. Our ever blessed Saviour suffered the devotion of Mary Magdalene to report her to an expensive expression of her love, and twice to anoint his feet with costly nard, yet if persons whose conditions were of more lustre or resplendency of fortune than was Jesus, who was cuous in his family and retinue, should have the same profusion upon the dressing and perfume of their bodies, possibly it might be truly said that it might better be sold and distributed to the poor. This Jesus received as he was the Christ and Son of the Lord; and by this he suffered him

designed to burial, and he received the oblation as eucharistical for the ejection of seven devils ; for ‘ therefore she loved much.’

12. The instances are not many. For however Jesus had some extraordinary transvolations and acts of emigration beyond the lines of his even and ordinary conversation, yet it was but seldom : for his being exemplary was of so great consideration, that he chose to have fewer instances of wonder, that he might transmit the more of an imitable virtue. And therefore we may establish this for a rule and limit of our imitations ; because Christ our lawgiver hath described all his Father’s will in sanctions and signature of laws. Whatsoever he commanded, and whatsoever he did of precise morality, or in pursuance of the laws of nature, in that we are to trace his footsteps. And in these his laws and his practice differ but as a map and a guide, a law and a judge, a rule and a precedent. But in the special instances of action, we are to abate the circumstances, and to separate the obedience from the effect. Whatsoever was moral in a ceremonial performance, that is highly imitable ; and the obedience of sacrificing, and the subordination to laws actually in being, even now they are abrogated, teach us our duty, in a differing subject, upon the like reason. Jesus’s going up to Jerusalem to the feasts, and his observation of the sabbaths, teach us our duty in celebration of festivals constituted by a competent and just authority. For that which gave excellency to the observation of Mosaical rites was an evangelical duty ; and the piety of obedience did not only consecrate the observations of Levi, but taught us our duty in the constitutions of Christianity.

13. Fifthly, As the holy Jesus did some things which we are not to imitate, so we also are to do some things which we cannot learn from his example. For there are some of our duties which presuppose a state of sin, and some suppose a violent temptation and promptness to it : and the duties of prevention and the instruments of restitution are proper to us, but conveyed only by precept, and not by precedent. Such are all the parts and actions of repentance, the duties of mortification and self-denial. For whatsoever the holy Jesus did in the matter of austerity, looked directly upon the work of our redemption, and looked back only on us by a reflex act, as Christ did on Peter when he looked him into repentance. Some states of life also there are which Jesus never led ; such are those of temporal governors, kings, and judges, merchants, lawyers, and the state of marriage : in the course of which lives many cases do occur which need a precedent, and the vivacity of an excellent example ; especially, since all the rules which they have, have not prevented the subtlety of the many inventions which men have found out, nor made provision for all contingencies. Such persons in all their special needs are to govern their actions by the rules of proportion, by analogy to the holiness of the person of Jesus, and the sanctity of his institution ; considering what might become a person professing the discipline of so holy a Master, and what he would have done in the like case ; taking our heights by the excellency of his innocence and charity. Only remember this, that in such cases we must always judge on the strictest side of piety and charity, if it be a matter concerning the interest of a second person ; and that in all

things we do those actions which are furthest removed from scandal, and such as towards ourselves are severe, towards others full of gentleness and sweetness. For so would the righteous and merciful Jesus have done. These are the best analogies and proportions. And in such cases, when the wells are dry, let us take water from a cistern, and propound to ourselves some exemplary saint, the necessities of whose life have determined his piety to the like occurrences.

14. But now from these particulars we shall best account to what the duty of the imitation of Jesus does amount. For it signifies, that we ‘should walk as he walked,’ tread in his steps, with our hand upon the guide, and our eye upon his rule; that we should render glory to him as he did to his Father; and that whatsoever we do, we should be careful that it do him honour, and no reproach to his institution: and then account these to be the integral parts of our duty, which are imitations of his actions or his spirit, of his rule or of his life; there being no better imitation of him than in such actions as do him pleasure, however he hath expressed or intimated the precedent.

15. He that gives alms to the poor takes Jesus by the hand; he that patiently endures injuries and affronts, helps him to bear his cross; he that comforts his brother in affliction, gives an amiable kiss of peace to Jesus; he that bathes his own and his neighbour’s sins in tears of penance and compassion, washes his Master’s feet. We lead Jesus into the recesses of our heart by holy meditations; and we enter into his heart when we express him in our actions: for so the apostle says, ‘He that is

in Christ walks as he also walked.'¹ But thus the actions of our life relate to him by way of worship and religion: but the use is admirable and effectual, when our actions refer to him as our copy, and we transcribe the original to the life. He that considers with what affections and lancinations of spirit, with what effusions of love Jesus prayed, what fervours and assiduity, what innocency of wish, what modesty of posture, what subordination to his Father, and conformity to the divine pleasure, were in all his devotions, is taught and excited to holy and religious prayer. The rare sweetness of his deportment in all temptations and violences of his passion, his charity to his enemies, his sharp reprehensions to the Scribes and Pharisees, his ingenuousness toward all men, are living and effectual sermons to teach us patience and humility, and zeal and candid simplicity, and justice in all our actions. I add no more instances, because all the following discourses will be prosecutions of this intendment. And the life of Jesus is not described to be like a picture in a chamber of pleasure, only for beauty, and entertainment of the eye; but like the Egyptian hieroglyphics, whose every feature is a precept, and the images converse with men by sense and signification of excellent discourses.

16. It was not without great reason advised, that every man should propound the example of a wise and virtuous personage, as Cato, or Socrates, or Brutus,² and, by a fiction of imagination, to suppose him present as a witness, and really to take his life as the direction of all our actions. The best and most excellent of the old lawgivers and

¹ 1 John, ii. 6.

² Seneca, Ep. 11.

sophers among the Greeks¹ had an allay of
 ness, and could not be exemplary all over.
 were noted for flatterers, as Plato and Aris-
 ; some for incontineney, as Aristotle, Epi-
 Zeno, Theognis, Plato, and Aristippus
 and Socrates, whom their oracle affirmed
 he wisest and most perfect man, yet was by
 very noted for extreme intemperance of anger
 in words and actions. And those Romans
 ere offered to them for examples, although
 ere great in reputation, yet they had also
 vices. Brutus dipped his hand in the blood
 for his prince, and his father by love, endear-
 and adoption; and Cato was but a wise
 all day, at night he was used to drink wine
 erally; and both he and Socrates did give
 wives unto their friends; the philosopher and
 orator were procurers of their wives' unchastity.
 et these were the best among the Gentiles.
 ow happy and richly furnished are Chris-
 with precedents of saints, whose faith and re-
 ons have been productive of more spiritual
 , and greater degrees of moral perfections!
 is I call the privilege of very great assist-
 that I might advance the reputation and ac-
 of the life of the glorious Jesu, which is not
 l by the imperfections of human nature, as
 ere, but receives great heightenings and per-
 is from the divinity of his person, of which
 ere never capable.

Menagoras, lib. iii. et xiii; et Theognis de se. Idem tes-
 Lærtius et Lactantius. Hoc notat S. Cyrillus, lib. vi.
 Julian.

atur et prisci Catonis Sæpe mero caluisse virtus. Horat.
 Apol. c. 39.

17. Let us therefore press after Jesus, as Elisha did after his master, with an inseparable prosecution, even whithersoever he goes; that according to the reasonableness and proportion expressed in St. Paul's advice, 'As we have borne the image of the earthly, we may also bear the image of the heavenly.'¹ For, "in vain are we called Christians, if we live not according to the example and discipline of Christ, the Father of the institution."² When St. Lawrence was in the midst of the torments of the gridiron, he made this to be the matter of his joy and eucharist, that he was admitted to the gates through which Jesus had entered: and therefore thrice happy are they 'who walk in his courts' all their days. And it is yet a nearer union and vicinity, to imprint his life in our souls, and express it in our exterior converse: and this is done by him only who (as St. Prosper describes the duty³) despises all those gilded vanities which he despised, that fears none of those sadnesses which he suffered, that practises or also teaches those doctrines which he taught, and hopes for the accomplishment of all his promises. And this is truest religion, and the most solemn adoration.⁴

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 49.

² Dictum Malachiæ Abbat. apud S. Bernardum in Vit. S. Mal.

³ Lib. ii. de Vita Contemplat. cap. 21.

⁴ Religiosissimus cultus imitari. Lactantius.

THE PRAYER.

ernal, holy, and most glorious Jesu, who hast united two of distance infinite, descending to the lownesses of human that thou mightest exalt human nature to a participation Divinity ; we thy people that sat in darkness and in the of death, have seen great light, to entertain our un- lings, and enlighten our souls with its excellent influ- for the excellency of thy sanctity shining gloriously in art of thy life is like thy angel, the pillar of fire which hy children from the darkneses of Egypt. Lord, open yes, and give me power to behold thy righteous glories ; my soul be so entertained with affections and holy ar- that I may never look back upon the flames of Sodom, y follow thy light, which recreates and enlightens, and as to the mountains of safety, and sanctuaries of holiness. esu, since thy image is imprinted on our nature by crea- t me also express thy image by all the parts of a holy nforming my will and affections to thy holy precepts, ing my understanding to the dictates and lessons of per- ; imitating thy sweetness and excellencies of society, thy n in prayer, thy conformity to God, thy zeal tempered eekness, thy patience heightened with charity ; that heart, nds, and eyes, and all my faculties may grow up with the e of God, till I come to the full measure of the stature of even to be a perfect man in Christ Jesus ; that at last light I may see light,' and reap the fruits of glory from ls of sanctity in the imitation of thy holy life, O blessed y Saviour, Jesu. Amen.

THE
HISTORY OF THE LIFE AND DEATH
OF THE
HOLY JESUS,

**BEGINNING AT THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED
VIRGIN MARY, UNTIL HIS BAPTISM AND
TEMPTATION, INCLUSIVELY.**

PART I.

THE LIFE

OF OUR BLESSED

LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

SECTION I.

The History of the Conception of Jesus.

1. WHEN the fulness of time was come, after the frequent repetition of promises, the expectation of the Jewish nation, the longings and tedious waitings of all holy persons, 'the departure of the sceptre from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet;' when the number of Daniel's years was accomplished, and the Egyptian and Assyrian kingdoms had their period, God having great compassion towards mankind, remembering his promises and our great necessities, 'sent his Son into the world,' to take upon him our nature, and all that guilt of sin which stuck close to our nature, and all that punishment which was consequent to our sin; which came to pass after this manner:—

2. In the days of Herod the king, 'the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee

named Nazareth,' to a holy 'maid called Mary espoused to Joseph;' and found her in a capacity and excellent disposition to receive the greatest honour that ever was done to the daughters of men. Her employment was holy and pious, her person young, her years florid and springing, her body chaste, her mind humble, and a rare repository of divine graces. She was full of grace and excellencies. And God poured upon her a full measure of honour, in making her the mother of the Messias. For 'the angel came to her and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women.'

3. We cannot but imagine the greatest mixture of innocent disturbances and holy passions that the first address of the angel did rather discompose her settledness, and interrupt the silence of her spirits, than dispossess her dominion which she ever kept over those subjects, which never had been taught to rebel beyond the mere possibility of natural imperfection. But, if the angel appeared in the shape of a man, it was an unusual arrest to the blessed virgin, who was accustomed to retirements and solitariness, and had not known an experience of admitting a comely person, but stranger, to her closet and privacies. But, if the heavenly messenger did retain a diviner form, more symbolical to angelical nature, and more proportionable to his glorious message; although his daily employment was a conversation with angels who in their daily ministering to the saints 'could behold her chaste conversation coupled with fear yet they used not any affrightening glories in the offices of their daily attendances, but were seen only by spiritual discernings. However, so

happened, that ‘when she saw him she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.’

4. But the angel, who came with designs of honour and comfort to her, not willing that the inequality and glory of the messenger should, like too glorious a light to a weaker eye, rather confound the faculty than enlighten the organ, did, before her thoughts could find a tongue, invite her to a more familiar confidence than possibly a tender virgin (though of the greatest serenity and composure) could have put on in the presence of such a beauty and such a holiness. ‘And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name Jesus.’

5. The holy virgin knew herself a person very unlikely to be a mother: for, although the desires of becoming a mother to the Messiah were great in every of the daughters of Jacob; and about that time the expectation of his revelation was high and pregnant, and therefore she was espoused to an honest and just person of her kindred and family, and so might not despair to become a mother; yet she was a person of a rare sanctity, and so mortified a spirit, that for all this dispensation of her according to the desire of her parents, and the custom of the nation, she had not set one step toward the consummation of her marriage, so much as in thought; and possibly had set herself back from it by a vow of chastity and holy celibate: for ‘Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?’

6. But the angel, who was a person of that na-

ture which knows no conjunctions but those of love and duty, knew that the piety of her soul and the religion of her chaste purposes was a great imitator of angelical purity, and therefore perceived where the philosophy of her question did consist; and being taught of God, declared, that the manner should be as miraculous as the message itself was glorious. For the angel told her, that this should not be done by any way which our sin and the shame of Adam had unhallowed, by turning nature into a blush, and forcing her to a retirement from a public attesting the means of her own preservation; but the whole matter was from God, and so should the manner be. For 'the angel said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.'

7. When the blessed virgin was so ascertained that she should be a mother and a maid; and that two glories, like the two luminaries of heaven, should meet in her, that she might in such a way become the mother of her Lord, that she might with better advantages be his servant; then all her hopes and all her desires received such satisfaction, and filled all the corners of her heart so much, as indeed it was fain to make room for its reception. But she, to whom the greatest things of religion, and the transportations of devotion, were made familiar by the assiduity and piety of her daily practices, however she was full of joy, yet she was carried like a full vessel, without the violent tossings of a tempestuous passion, or the wrecks of a stormy imagination. And, as the

power of the Holy Ghost did descend upon her like rain into a fleece of wool, without any obstreperous noises or violences to nature, but only the extraordinariness of an exaltation, so her spirit received it with the gentleness and tranquillity fitted for the entertainment of the Spirit of Love, and a quietness symbolical to the Holy Guest of her spotless womb, the Lamb of God; for she meekly replied, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word.' And the angel departed from her, having done his message. And at the same time the Holy Spirit of God did make her to conceive in her womb the immaculate Son of God, the Saviour of the world.

AD. SECTION I.

Considerations upon the Annunciation of the blessed Mary, and the Conception of the Holy Jesus.

I. THAT which shines brightest presents itself first to the eye; and the devout soul, in the chain of excellent and precious things which are represented in the counsel, design, and first beginnings of the work of our redemption, hath not leisure to attend to the twinkling of the lesser stars, till it hath stood and admired the glory and eminencies of the divine love, manifested in the incarnation of the Word eternal. God had no necessity, in order to his conservation or the heightening his own felicity, but out of mere and perfect charity, and the bowels of compassion, sent into the world his only Son for remedy to human miseries, to ennoble our nature by an union with divinity, to sanctify it

with his justice, to enrich it with his grace, to instruct it with his doctrine, to fortify it with his power, to rescue it from servitude, to assert the liberty of the sons of God, and at last to make it partaker of a beatifical resurrection.

2. God, who in the infinite treasures of his wisdom and providence could have found out other ways for our redemption than the incarnation of his Eternal Son, was pleased to choose that way only that the remedy by man might have proportion to the causes of our ruin, whose introduction and intromission was by the prevarication of man, but also that we might with freer dispensation receive the influences of a Saviour with whom we might communicate in nature. Although Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, were of the same name and current, yet they were not so salutary as the waters of Jordan to cure Naaman's leprosy. And, if God had made the remedy of human nature to come all the way clothed in prodigious and affrighting, and as full of majesty as the descensions upon mount Sinai, yet it had not been so useful and complying to human necessities, as the descent of God to the susception of human nature, whereby (as in all medicaments) the best is wrought by those instruments which have the fewest dissonances to our temper, and are the nearest to our constitution. For thus the face of the world became humane, alluring, full of consolation, and the sweetnesses of love, exercise, humble, and medicinal.

3. And if we consider the reasonableness of the thing, what can be given more excellent for the redemption of man, than the blood of the

God? And what can more ennoble our nature, than that by the means of his holy humanity it was taken up into the cabinet of the mysterious Trinity? What better advocate could we have for us, than him that is appointed to be our Judge? And what greater hopes of reconciliation can be imagined, than that God, in whose power it is to give an absolute pardon, hath taken a new nature, entertained an office, and undergone a life of poverty, with a purpose to procure our pardon? For now, though as the righteous Judge he will judge the nations righteously; yet by the susception of our nature, and its appendant crimes, he is become a party; and having obliged himself as man, as he is God, he will satisfy, by putting the value of an infinite merit to the actions and sufferings of his humanity. And if he had not been God, he could not have given us remedy; if he had not been man, we should have wanted the excellency of example.

4. And till now human nature was less than that of angels; but by the incarnation of the Word was to be exalted above the cherubims; yet the archangel Gabriel being dispatched in embassy, to represent the joy and exaltation of his inferior, instantly trims his wings with love and obedience, and hastens with this narrative to the holy virgin. And if we should reduce our prayers to action, and do God's will on earth as the angels in heaven do; we should promptly execute every part of the divine will, though it were to be instrumental to the exaltation of a brother above ourselves; knowing no end but conformity to the divine will, and making simplicity of intention to be the fringes and exterior borders of our garments.

5. When the eternal God meant to stoop so low as to be fixed to our centre, he chose for his mother an holy person and a maid, but yet affianced to a just man, that he might not only be secure in the innocency, but also provided for in the reputation of his holy mother : teaching us, that we must not only satisfy ourselves in the purity of our purposes and hearty innocence, but that we must provide also things honest in the sight of all men, being free from the suspicion and semblances of evil ; so making provision for private innocence and public honesty : it being necessary, in order to charity and edification of our brethren, that we hold forth no impure flames or smoking firebrands, but pure and trimmed lamps, in the eyes of all the world.

6. And yet her marriage was more mysterious : for as, besides the miracle, it was an eternal honour and advancement to the glory of virginity, that he chose a virgin for his mother ; so it was in that manner attempered, that the virgin was betrothed, lest honourable marriage might be disreputed and seem inglorious by a positive rejection from any participation of the honour. Divers of the old doctors,¹ from the authority of Ignatius, add another reason, saying, that the blessed Jesus was therefore born of a woman betrothed, and under the pretence of marriage, that the devil, who knew the Messiah was to be born of a virgin, might not expect him there, but so be ignorant of the person, till God had served many ends of providence upon him.

7. The angel in his address needed not to go in inquisition after a wandering fire, but knew she

¹ Origin. Homil. vi. in Levit. Hier. Comment. in 1 Matt. S. Basilius, et alii.

star fixed in her own orb :—he found her at ; and lest that also might be too large a circle she was yet confined to a more intimate retreat, she was in her oratory, private and devout. There are some curiosities so bold and determinate to tell the very matter of her prayer, and that she was praying for the salvation of all the world, the revelation of the Messiah, desiring she might be so happy as to kiss the feet of her who should have the glory to be his mother.¹ We have security of the particular; but there is no piety so confident, as to require a sign to create a belief. Her employment at the instant was holy and pious: but in that disposition she received a vision, which the greatest queens would have purchased with the quitting of their diadems, and hath signed an excellent document to all women, they accustom themselves often to those retreats, where none but God and his angels can admittance. For the holy Jesus can come to us too, and dwell with them, hallowing their souls and consigning their bodies to a participation of all his glories. But recollecting of all our carnal thoughts and exterior extravagancies, and being freed from the inconveniences of a too frequent conversation, is the best circumstance to dispose us for heavenly visitation.

The holy virgin, when she saw an angel, and received a testimony from heaven of her grace and holiness, was troubled within herself at the salutation, and the manner of it. For she had learned, that the influence of divine comforts and prosperous success should not exempt us from fear, but make

¹ S. Bernard.

us the more prudent and wary, lest it entangle in a vanity of spirit : God having ordered, that spirits should be affected with dispositions in degrees contrary to exterior events, that we be full in the affluence of prosperous things, and full in adversity ; as knowing that this may prove benefit and advantage ; and the changes that consequent to the other are sometimes full of chiefs, but always of danger. But her silence and fear were her guardians ; that, to prevent excesses of joy ; this, of vainer complacency.

9. And it is not altogether inconsiderable to serve, that the holy virgin came to a great perfection and state of piety by a few, and those moderate and even, exercises and external actions. She travelled over the world, preached to the Gentiles, disputed against the Jews, confounded her enemies, wrote excellently learned letters, suffered many injuries, affronts, and persecutions to the height of wonder, and by these violences of life, action, and patience obtained the crown of an excellent religion and devotion : but the holy virgin, although she was engaged sometimes in active life, as in the exercise of an ordinary and small economy, government, or ministries of a family, yet she arrived to her perfections by the means of a quiet and silent piety, the internal actions of love, devotion, and contemplation ; and instructs us, that although only those who have opportunity and powers to perform magnificent religion, or a pompous charity, or a successful conversion of souls, or assiduous and continual preachings, or exterior demonstrations of corporal mercy, shall have the greatest crowns, yet the addition of degrees and accidental rewards is not necessary, but the silent affections, the splendours of an

nal devotion, the unions of love, humility, and obedience, the daily offices of prayer and praises sung to God, the acts of faith and fear, of patience and meekness, of hope and reverence, repentance and charity, and those graces which walk in a veil and silence, make great ascents to God, and as sure progress to favour and a crown, as the more ostentatious and laborious exercises of a more solemn religion. No man needs to complain of want of power or opportunities for religious perfections: a devout woman in her closet, praying with much zeal and affections for the conversion of souls, is in the same order to a shining like the stars in glory, as he who by excellent discourses puts it into a more forward disposition to be actually performed. And possibly her prayers obtained energy and force to my sermon, and made the ground fruitful, and the seed spring up to life eternal. Many times God is present in the still voice and private retirements of a quiet religion, and the constant spiritualities of an ordinary life; when the loud and impetuous winds, and the shining fires of more laborious and expensive actions, are profitable to others only; like a tree of balsam, distilling precious liquor for others, not for its own use.

THE PRAYER.

O eternal and Almighty God, who didst send thy holy angel in embassy to the blessed virgin mother of our Lord, to manifest the actuating thine eternal purpose of the redemption of mankind by the incarnation of thine eternal Son; put me, by the assistances of thy divine grace, into such holy dispositions, that I may

never impede the event and effect of those mercies which in the counsels of thy predestination thou didst design for me. Give me a promptness to obey thee to the degree and semblance of angelical alacrity; give me holy purity and piety, prudence and modesty, like those excellencies which thou didst create in the ever blessed virgin, the mother of God. Grant that my employment be always holy, unmixed with worldly affections, and as much as my condition of life will bear, retired from secular interests and disturbances; that I may converse with angels, entertain the Holy Jesus, conceive him in my soul, nourish him with the expresses of most innocent and holy affections, and bring him forth and publish him in a life of piety and obedience, that he may dwell in me for ever, and I may for ever dwell with him in the house of eternal pleasures and glories, world without end. Amen.

SECTION II.

Bearing of Jesus in the womb of the blessed Virgin.

ALTHOUGH the blessed virgin had a faith as strong and ready as her body was chaste and her nature pure; yet God, who uses to give 'full measure shaken together and running over,' did, by the confirmation and fixing the confidence of the message sent, give an instance of his omnipotency in a very particular of an extraordinary conception: for the angel said, 'Behold, thy cousin Elizabeth hath also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month with her that was called barren: for with God nothing shall be impossible.' This argument would have satisfied the necessity of the faith which had no scruple: and a greater miracle would not have done it in the incredulity of an obstinate and pertinacious spirit. But the holy virgin had complacency enough in the message, and fully desires about her to carry her understanding as far as her affections, even to the fruition of the angel's message; which is such a sublimity of vision that it is its utmost consummation, and shall be crowned when our faith is turned into vision, our hopes into actual possessions, and our grace into glory.

And she, who was now full of God, bearing in her virgin womb, and the Holy Spirit within her heart, who had also overshadowed her, entered her to a supernatural and miraculous conception, 'arose with haste' and gladness, to com-

municate that joy which was designed for all the world : and she found no breast to pour forth the first emanations of her overjoyed heart so fit as her cousin Elizabeth's, who had received testimony from God to have been righteous, ' walking in all the commandments of the Lord blameless,' who also had a special portion in this great honour; for she was designed to be the mother of the Baptist, who was sent as a forerunner ' to prepare the ways of the Lord, and to make his paths straight. And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill-country with haste, into a city of Judah.'

3. Her haste was in proportion to her joy and desires, but yet went no greater pace than her religion. For as in her journey she came near to Jerusalem, she turned in, that she might visit his temple, whose temple she herself was now; and there, not only to remember the pleasures of religion, which she had felt in continual descents and showers falling on her pious heart, for the space of eleven years attendance there in her childhood, but also to pay the first fruits of her thanks and joy, and to lay all her glory at his feet, whose humble handmaid she was in the greatest honour of being his blessed mother. Having worshipped, she went on her journey, ' and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth.'

4. It is not easy to imagine what a collision of joys was at this blessed meeting : two mothers of two great princes, the one ' the greatest that was born of woman,' and the other was his Lord, and these made mothers by two miracles, met together with joy and mysteriousness; where the mother of our Lord went to visit the mother of his servant, and the Holy Ghost made the meeting festival, and

descended upon Elizabeth, and she prophesied. Never but in heaven was there more joy and ecstasy. The persons who were women, whose fancies and affections were not only hallowed, but made pregnant and big with religion, meeting together to compare and unite their joys and their eucharist, and then made prophetical and inspired, must needs have discoursed like seraphims and the most ecstasied order of intelligences; for all the faculties of nature were turned into grace, and expressed in their way the excellent solemnity. For 'it came to pass, when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.'

5. After they had both prophesied and sung their hymns, and re-saluted each other with the religion of saints and the joys of angels, 'Mary abode with her cousin Elizabeth about three months, and then returned to her own house;' where, when she appeared with her holy burden to her husband Joseph, and that he perceived her to be with child, and knew that he had never unsealed that holy fountain of virginal purity, he was troubled. For, although her deportment had been pious and chaste to a miracle, her carriage reserved, and so grave that she drove away temptations and impure visits, and all unclean purposes from the neighbourhood of her holy person; yet, when he saw she was with child, and had not yet been taught a lesson higher than the principles of nature, 'he was minded to put her away,' for he knew she was with child; but yet privily, because he was a good man, and knew her piety to have been such that it had almost done violence to his sense, and made him disbelieve what was visible

and notorious ; and therefore he would do it privately. ' But, while he thought on these things, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph, being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife.'

AD. SECTION II.

Considerations concerning the Circumstances of the Interval between the Conception and Nativity.

1. WHEN the blessed virgin was ascertained of the manner of her becoming a mother, and that her tremblings were over, upon the security she should preserve her virgin purity as a clean oblation to the honour of God ; then she expressed her consent to the angelical message, and instantly she conceived the holy Jesus in her womb, by the supernatural and divine influence of the Holy Ghost. For she was highly zealous to reconcile her being mother to the Messiah, with those purities and holy celibate which she had designed to keep, as advantages to the interests of religion, and his honour who chose her from all the daughters of Adam, to be instrumental in the restitution of grace and innocence to all her father's family. And we shall receive benefit from so excellent example, if we be not so desirous of a privilege as of a virtue, of honour as of piety : and as we submit to the weight and pressure of sadnesses and infelicities,

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 : makes to descend on us as more fit, when
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 and that the praises of God may be sung

aloud, till the sound strike at heaven, and join with the hallelujahs which the morning-stars in their orbs pay to their great Creator.

4. When the holy virgin had begun her journey, she made haste over the mountains, that she might not only satisfy the desires of her joy by a speedy gratulation, but lest she should be too long abroad under the dispersion and discomposing of her retirements: and therefore she hastens to an inclosure, to her cousin's house; as knowing that all virtuous women, like tortoises, carry their house on their heads, and their chapel in their heart, and their danger in their eye, and their souls in their hands, and God in all their actions. And indeed, her very little burden which she bare hindered her not but she might make haste enough; and as her spirit was full of cheerfulness and alacrity, so even her body was made airy and vege: for there was no sin in her burden to fill it with natural inconveniences; and there is this excellency in all spiritual things, that they do no disadvantage to our persons, nor retard our just temporal interests. And the religion by which we carry Christ within us is neither so peevish as to disturb our health, nor so sad as to discompose our just and modest cheerfulness, nor so prodigal as to force us to needs and ignoble trades; but recreates our body by the medicine of holy fastings and temperance, fills us full of serenities and complacencies by the sweetnesses of a holy conscience, and joys spiritual; and promotes our temporal interests by the gains and increases of the rewards of charity, and by securing God's providence over us while we are in the pursuit of the heavenly kingdom. And as in these dispositions she climbed the mountains with

much facility, so there is nothing in our whole life of so great difficulty but it may be managed by those assistances we receive from the Holiest Jesus, when we carry him about us ; as the valleys are exalted, so the mountains are plain before us.

5. When her cousin Elizabeth saw the mother of her Lord come to visit her, as the Lord himself descended to visit all the world in great humility, she was pleased and transported to the height of wonder and prophecy ; and ‘ the babe sprang in her womb ’ and was sanctified, first doing his homage and adoration to his Lord that was in presence. And we also, although we can do nothing unless the Lord first prevent us with his gracious visitation, yet, if he first come unto us, and we accept and entertain him with the expresses and correspondencies of our duty, we shall receive the grace and honour of sanctification. But if St. Elizabeth, who received testimony from God that she ‘ walked in all the commandments of the Lord blameless,’ was carried into ecstasy, wondering at the dignation and favour done to her by the mother of her Lord ; with what preparations and holy solemnities ought we to entertain his addresses to us by his holy sacrament, by the immissions of his Spirit, by the assistances of his graces, and all other his vouchsafings and descents into our hearts !

6. The blessed virgin, hearing her cousin full of spirit and prophecy, calling her ‘ blessed,’ and praising her faith, and confirming her joy, instantly sang her hymn to God, returning those praises which she received, to him to whom they did appertain. For so we should worship God, with all our praises, being willing upon no other condition to extend one hand to receive our own honour,

but that with the other we might transmit it to God ; that as God is honoured in all his creatures, so he may be honoured in us too ; looking upon the graces which God hath given us but as greater instruments and abilities to serve him, being none of ours, but talents which are entrusted into our banks to be improved. But as a precious pearl is orient and medicinal, because God hath placed those excellencies in it for ends of his own, while itself is dead to all apprehensions of it, and knows no reflections upon its own value ; only God is magnified in his work ; so is every pious person precious and holy, but mortified to all vainer complacencies in those singularities and eminencies which God placed there because he was so pleased, saying, there he would have a temple built ; because from thence he would take delight to receive glory and adoration.

7. After all these holy and festival joys which two glad mothers feasted themselves withal, a sad cloud did intervene and passed before the face of the blessed virgin. The just and righteous Joseph, her espoused husband, perceiving her to be with child, ‘ was minded to put her away,’ as not knowing the divinity of the fountain which watered the virgin’s sealed and hallowed womb, and made it fruitful. But he proposed to do it privily, that he might preserve the reputation of his spouse, whose piety he knew was great, and was sorrowful it should now set in a sad night and be extinct. But it was an exemplary charity, and reads to us a rule for our deportment towards erring and lapsed persons, that we intreat them with meekness and pity and fear ; not hastening their shame, nor provoking their spirit, nor making their remedy des-

perate by using them rudely, till there be no worse thing for them to fear if they should be dissolved into all licentiousness. For an open shame is commonly protested unto, when it is remediless,¹ and the person either despairs and sinks under the burden, or else grows impudent and tramples upon it. But the gentleness of a modest and charitable remedy preserves that which is virtue's girdle, fear and blushing; and the beginning of a punishment chides them into the horror of remembrance and guilt, but preserves their meekness and modesty, because they, not feeling the worst of evils, dare not venture upon the worst of sins.

8. But it seems the blessed virgin, having received this greatest honour, had not made it known to her husband Joseph; and when she went to her cousin Elizabeth, the virgin was told of it by her cousin before she spake of it herself, for her cousin had it by revelation and the spirit of prophecy. And it is in some circumstances and from some persons more secure to conceal visions, and those heavenly gifts which create estimations among men, than to publish them, which may possibly minister to vanity; and those exterior graces may do God's work, though no observer note them but the person for whose sake they are sent: like rain falling in uninhabited valleys, where no eye observes showers; yet the valleys laugh and sing to God in their refreshment without a witness. However, it is better to hear the report of our good things from the mouths of others, than from ourselves; and better yet, if the beauty of the tabernacle be covered with skins, that none of our beau-

¹ ——— *frontanque à crimine sumit.*

ties be seen but by worshippers; that is, where glory of God and the interests of religion or church are concerned in their publication. For so it opened to be in the case of the blessed virgin she related to her cousin Elizabeth; and so it opened not to be, as she referred to her husband Joseph.

9. The holy virgin could not but know, that Joseph would be troubled with sorrow and inseparable apprehensions concerning her being with child: such was her innocence, and her confidence in God that she held her peace, expecting which way would provide a remedy to the inconvenience. if we 'commit ourselves to God in well-doing unto a faithful Creator,' preserving the tranquillity of our spirits and the evenness of our temper in the assault of infamy and disreputation, God, who loves our innocence, will be its patron, and will assuage from the scandal, if it be expedient for us; if not, it is not fit we should desire it. But if holy Jesus did suffer his mother to fall into misinterpretation and suspicion, which could not but be a great affliction to her excellent spirit, rarely pierced as an eye, highly sensible of every touch, we must not think it strange, if we be troubled and pressed with a calamity and unhandsome accidents: only remember, that God will find a remedy to the trouble, and will sanctify the affliction, secure the person, if we be innocent, as was the holy virgin.

10. But Joseph was not hasty in the execution of his purposes, nor in making his thoughts dominate, but stood long in deliberation, and long before he acted it, because it was an invidious matter, and a rigour. He was first to have defa-

with the easiest sentence, than to put things
nity, and render the person desperate and
remedy, and provoked by the suffering of
t of what she could fear. No obligation to
loes force a man to be cruel, or to use the
sentence. A just man does justice to
an, and to every thing; and then, if he be
, he knows there is a debt of mercy and
ion due to the infirmities of man's nature,
t debt is to be paid: and he that is cruel
gentle to a sinning person, and does the
ing to him, dies in his debt, and is un-
ity, and forbearance, and long-suffering,
interpretation, and excusing our brother,
ng things in the best sense, and passing the
sentence, are as certainly our duty, and
every person that does offend and can re-
calling men to account can be owing to
and are first to be paid; and he that does
s an unjust person: which because Joseph
, he did not call furiously for justice, or
that God required it at his hands pre-

rest and his justice too, by intending to ‘dismiss her privately.’ But before the thing was irremediable, God ended his question by a heavenly demonstration, and sent an angel to reveal to him the innocence of his spouse, and the divinity of her Son; and that he was an immediate derivative from heaven, and the heir of all the world. And in all our doubts we shall have a resolution from heaven, or some of its ministers, if we have recourse thither for a guide, and be not hasty in our discourses, or inconsiderate in our purposes, or rash in judgment. For God loves to give assistance to us, when we most fairly and prudently endeavour that grace be not put to do all our work, but to facilitate our labour; not creating new faculties, but improving those of nature. If we consider warily, God will guide us in the determination: but a hasty person outruns his guide, prevaricates his rule, and very often engages upon error.

THE PRAYER.

O Holy Jesu, Son of the Eternal God, thy glory is far above all heavens, and yet thou didst descend to earth, that thy descent might be the more gracious, by how much thy glories were admirable, and natural, and inseparable. I adore thy holy humanity with humble veneration, and the thankful addresses of religious joy, because thou hast personally united human nature to the eternal Word, carrying it above the seats of the highest cherubim. This great and glorious mystery is the honour and glory of man: it was the expectation of our fathers, who saw the mysteriousness of thy incarnation at great and obscure distances. And blessed be thy name, that thou hast caused me to be born after the fulfilling of thy prophecies, and the consummation and the exhibition of so great a love, so great mysteriousness. Holy Jesu, though I admire and adore the immensity of thy

BETWEEN THE CONCEPTION AND NATIVITY. 111

ve and condescension, who wert pleased to undergo our burdens and infirmities for us ; yet I abhor myself, and detest my own impurities, which were so great and contradictory to the ex-
mcy of God, that to destroy sin, and save us, it became necessary that thou shouldst be sent into the world, to die our death
e us, and to give us of thy life.

II.

Dearest Jesu, thou didst not breathe one sigh, nor shed one
drop of blood, nor weep one tear, nor suffer one stripe, nor
teach one sermon, for the salvation of the devils : and what
shame and shame is it then, that I should cause so many insur-
mountable loads of sorrows to fall upon thy sacred head ? Thou
art wholly given for me, wholly spent upon my uses, and wholly
for every one of the elect. Thou, in the beginning of the work
of our redemption, didst suffer nine months' imprisonment in the
womb of thy holy mother, to redeem me from the eternal
bondage of sin, and its miserable consequences. Holy Jesu, let
me be born anew, receive a new birth, and a new life, imitating
thy graces and excellencies by which thou art beloved of thy
father, and hast obtained for us a favour and atonement.
Let thy holy will be done by me, let all thy will be wrought in
me, let thy will be wrought concerning me ; that I may do thy
pleasure, and submit to the dispensation of thy Providence, and
conform to thy holy will, and may for ever serve thee in the
communion of saints, in the society of thy redeemed ones now,
and in the glories of eternity. Amen.

SECTION III.

The Nativity of our blessed Saviour Jesus.

1. THE holy maid longed to be a glad mother and she who carried a burden, whose proper commensuration is the days of eternity, counted tedious minutes, expecting when the Sun of righteousness should break forth from his bed, when nine months he hid himself as behind a fruit cloud. About the same time God, who in his finite wisdom does concentrate and tie together one end things of disparate and disproportioned natures, making things improbable to co-operate to what wonder or what truth he pleases, brought the holy virgin to Bethlehem, the city of David 'to be taxed' with her husband Joseph, according to a decree upon all the world, issuing from Augustus Cæsar.¹ But this happened in this conjunction of time, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet Micah, 'And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel.' This rare act of Providence was highly remarkable, because this taxing seems wholly to have been ordered by God to serve and minister to the circumstances of this birth.² For this taxing was not in order to tribute: Herod was now king, and received all the revenues of the fiscus, and paid Augustus an appointed tribute after the manner

¹ Euseb. lib. i. c. 6. Histor. Eccles. anno scilicet tertio Olympiade 194. Cæsare Augusto et Plautio Silano Cons.

² S. Chrysost. Hom. 8, in Matth.

other kings, friends and relatives of the Roman empire:¹ neither doth it appear that the Romans laid a new tribute on the Jews before the confiscation of the goods of Archelaus. Augustus therefore sending special delegates to tax every city, made only an inquest after the strength of the Roman empire in men and moneys; and did himself no other advantage, but was directed by him who rules and turns the hearts of princes, that he might, by verifying a prophecy, signify and publish the divinity of the mission and birth of Jesus.

2. She that had conceived by the operation of that Spirit who dwells within the element of love, was no ways impeded in her journey by the greatness of her burden, but arrived at Bethlehem in the throng of strangers, who had so filled up the places of hospitality and public entertainment, that 'there was no room for Joseph and Mary in the inn.' But yet she felt that it was necessary to retire where she might softly lay her burden, who began now to call at the gates of his prison, and nature was ready to let him forth. But she that was mother to the King of all the creatures, could find no other but a stable,² a cave of the rock, whither she retired: where when it began to be with her after the manner of women, she humbly bowed her knees, in the posture and guise of worshippers, and in the midst of glorious thoughts and highest

¹ Vide Suidam in verbo ἀπογραφή. Dio. lib. lvi.

² Juxta Propheticum illud, Isa. xxxiii. 16. Οὗτος οἰκήσει ἐν ὑψηλῷ σπηλαίῳ πέτρας ἰσχυρῆς ἄρτος δοθήσεται αὐτῷ, apud LXX. Sed hanc periodum Judæi eraserunt ex Hebræo textu. Sic et Symmachus ἄρτος δοθήσεται, mysticè Bethlehem, sive Domus panis indigitatur.

speculation, 'brought forth her first-born into the world.'

As there was no sin in the conception, so neither had she pains in the production, as the church from the days of Gregory Nazianzen until now hath piously believed: though before his days there were some opinions to the contrary,¹ but certainly neither so pious nor so reasonable. For to her alone the punishment of Eve did not extend, that in sorrow she should bring forth: for where nothing of sin was an ingredient, there misery cannot cohabit. For though amongst the daughters of men many conceptions are innocent and holy, being sanctified by the word of God and prayer, hallowed by marriage, designed by prudence, seasoned by temperance, conducted by religion towards a just, an hallowed, and an holy end, and yet their productions are in sorrow; yet this of the blessed virgin might be otherwise, because here sin was no relative, and neither was in the principle nor the derivative, in the act nor in the habit, in the root nor in the branch: there was nothing in this but the sanctification of a virgin's womb, and that could not be the parent of sorrow, especially that gate not having been opened by which the curse always entered. And as to conceive by the Holy Ghost was glorious, so to bring forth any of the fruits of the Spirit is joyful, and full of felicities. And he that came from his grave fast tied with a stone and signature, and into the college of apostles the doors being shut, and into the glories of his Father through the solid orbs of all the firmament, came also (as the church piously believes) into the

¹ Vide Waddingum. p. 270.

without doing violence to the virginal body of his mother, that he did also leave it entire, to be as a seal, that none might break the gate of that sanctuary; that it might be which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, 'this gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it: because the Lord of Israel hath entered by it, therefore it shall be shut.'¹

Though all the world were concerned in the birth of this Great Prince, yet I find no story of that ministered at it save only angels, who were their duty to their Lord, and the great interest in that person; whom, as soon as he was born, he was presented to his mother, who could not but rejoice with a joy next to the rejoicings of glory in that vision, seeing him to be born her Son, the Son of God, of greater beauty than angels, purer than angels, more loving than the angels, as dear as the eye and heart of God, who was from eternity engraven, his beloved, only-begotten.

When the virgin mother now felt the first tenderness and yearnings of a mother's bowels, and saw her dear Son of the world born, poor as her fortunes represented him, naked as the innocence of the infant she took him, and 'wrapped him in swaddling clothes;' and after she had awhile cradled him in her arms, she laid him in a manger. For the design of his humility; that as the last of his life was to be represented among the lowly, so the first might be amongst beasts, the ox and the oxen; according to that mysterious

¹ Ezek. xliv. 2.

hymn of the prophet Habakkuk, ‘His bright was as the light, he had horns coming out of hand, and there was the hiding of his power.’¹

6. But this place, which was one of the instances of his humility, grew to be as venerable as became an instrument, and it was consecrated into a church, the crib into an altar,² where lay that Lamb of God which afterwards was sacrificed for the sins of all the world. And when Adrian the emperor, who intended a great deal to it, built a temple to Venus and Adonis in the place where the holy virgin-mother and her dear Holy Son were humbly laid; even so he could obtain, but that even amongst the Gentile inhabitants of the neighbouring countries it was held in an account far above scandal and contempt. God can ennoble even the meanest of creatures, especially if it be but a relative and instrumental religion, higher than the injuries of scoffers and malicious persons. But it was then a temple of religion, full of glory, when angels were ministers, the holy virgin the worshipper, Christ the deity.

AD. SECTION III.

Considerations upon the Birth of our Blessed Jesus.

1. ALTHOUGH the blessed Jesus, desired with ardency of an inflamed love, to be born, to finish the work of our redemption; yet

¹ Hab. iii. 4. In medio animalium cognosceris.

² Ven. Bede de locis sanctis, c. viii. S. Hieron.

he period of our nature, nor break the laws
 mb, and antedate his own sanctions which
 tablished for ever. He staid nine months,
 brake forth as a giant joyful to run his
 For premature and hasty actions, and such
 as know not how to expect the times ap-
 n God's decree, are like hasty fruit, or a
 rson snatched away in his florid age, sad-
 nely. He that hastens to enjoy his wish-
 e time, raises his own expectation, and yet
 unpleasant by impatience, and loseth the
 of the fruition when it comes, because he
 e his desires bigger than the thing can
 He that must eat an hour before his time,
 bation of his intemperance or his weak-
 l if we dare not trust God with the cir-
 e of the event, and stay his leisure, either
 pute the infinity of his wisdom, or give
 onstration of our own vanity.

en God descended to earth, he chose to
 n the suburbs and retirement of a small
 it he was pleased to die at Jerusalem, the
 s of Judæa: which chides our shame and
 o are willing to publish our gaities in
 nd the corners of the streets of most popu-
 es; but our defects and the instruments
 miliation we carry into deserts, and cover
 ight, and hide them underground; think-
 crecy dark enough to hide our shame, nor
 re large enough to behold our pompous
 for so we make provisions for pride, and
 to exclude humility.

en the holy virgin now perceived that the
 on of the nations was arrived at the very
 revelation and entrance into the world,

manity. And after all this, he is our Saviour; that to our duties of wonder and adoration we may add the affections of love and union, as himself, besides his being admirable in himself, is become profitable to us. *Verè Verbum hoc est abbreviatum*, saith the prophet; the eternal Word of the Father is shortened to the dimensions of an infant.

6. Here then are concentrated the prodigies of greatness and goodness, of wisdom and charity, of meekness and humility, which march all the way in mystery and incomprehensible mixtures; if we consider him in the bosom of his Father, where he is seated by the postures of love and essential felicity; and in the manger, where love also placed him, and an infinite desire to communicate his felicities to us. As he is God, his throne is in the heaven, and he fills all things by his immensity: as he is man, he is circumscribed by an uneasy cradle, and cries in a stable. As he is God, he is seated upon a superexalted throne; as man, exposed to the lowest estate of uneasiness and need. As God, clothed in a robe of glory, at the same instant when you may behold and wonder at his humanity wrapped in cheap and unworthy cradlebands. As God, he is encircled with millions of angels; as man, in the company of beasts. As God, he is the eternal Word of the Father eternal, sustained by himself, all sufficient, and without need: and yet he submitted himself to a condition imperfect, inglorious, indigent, and necessitous. And this consideration is apt and natural to produce great affections of love, duty and obedience, desires of union and conformity to his sacred person, life, actions, and laws; that we resolve all our thoughts, and finally determine all our reason and

our passions and capacities upon that saying of St. Paul, ‘ He that loves not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed.’¹

7. Upon the consideration of these glories, if a pious soul shall, upon the supports of faith and love, enter into the stable where this great King was born, and with affections behold every member of the holy body, and thence pass into the soul of Jesus, we may see a scheme of holy meditations, enough to entertain all the degrees of our love and of our understanding, and make the mystery of the nativity as fruitful of holy thoughts as it was of blessings to us. And it may serve instead of a description of the person of Jesus conveyed to us in imperfect and apocryphal schemes. If we could behold his sacred feet with those affections which the holy virgin did, we have transmitted to us those mysteries in story which she had first in part by spiritual and divine infused light, and afterwards by observation. Those holy feet, tender and unable to support his sacred body, should bear him over all the province of his cure with great zeal for the gaining of souls to the belief and obedience of his holy laws: those are the feet that should walk upon seas and hills of water, as upon firm pavement; at which the lepers and diseased persons should stoop, and gather health up; which Mary Magdalen should wash with tears, and wipe with her hair, and anoint with costly nard, as expressions of love and adoration, and there find absolution and remedy for her sins; and which finally should be rent by the nails of the cross, and afterwards ascend above the heavens, making the earth to be his foot-

¹ 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

stool. From hence take patterns of imitation, that our piety be symbolical, that our affections be passionate and eucharistical, full of love, and wonder and adoration, that our feet tread in the same steps and that we transfer the symbol into mystery, and the mystery to devotion, praying the Holy Jesus to actuate the same mercies in us which were finished at his holy feet, forgiving our sins, healing our sicknesses; and then place ourselves irremovably, becoming his disciples, and strictly observing the rules of his holy institution, sitting at the feet of this our great Master.

8. In the same manner a pious person may, (with the blessed virgin) pass to the consideration of his holy hands, which were so often lifted up to God in prayer; whose touch was miraculous and medicinal, cleansing lepers, restoring perishing limbs, opening blind eyes, raising dead persons to life; those persons which fed many thousands by two miracles of multiplication, that purged the temple from profaneness, that in a sacramental manner bare his own body, and gave it to be the food and refreshment of elect souls, and after were cloven and rent upon the cross, till the wounds became (after the resurrection) so many transparencies and glorious instruments of solemn, spiritual, and efficacious benediction. Transmit this meditation into affections and practices, lifting up pure hands in prayer, that our devotions be united to the merits of his glorious intercession; and putting ourselves into his hands and holy providence, let us beg those effects upon our souls and spiritual cures, which his precious hands did operate upon their bodies, transferring those similitudes to our ghostly and personal advantages.

9. We may also behold his holy breast, and consider, that there lay that sacred heart, like the dove within the ark, speaking peace to us, being the regiment of love and sorrows, the fountain of both the sacraments, running out in the two holy streams of blood and water, when the rock was smitten, when his holy side was pierced; and there, with St. John, let us lay our head, and place our heart, and thence draw a treasure of holy revelations and affections, that we may rest in him only, and upon him lay our burdens, filling every corner of our heart with thoughts of the most amiable and beloved Jesus.

10. In like manner we may unite the day of his nativity with the day of his passion, and consider all the parts of his body, as it was instrumental in all the work of our redemption, and so imitate, and in some proportion partake of, that great variety of sweetnesses and amorous reflexes and gracious intercourses which passed between the blessed virgin and the Holy Child, according to his present capacities, and the clarity of that light which was communicated to her by divine infusion: and all the members of this Blessed Child, his eyes, his face, his head, all the organs of his senses, afford variety of entertainment and motion to our affections, according as they served in their several employments and co-operations in the mysteries of our restitution.

11. But his body was but his soul's upper garment, and the considerations of this are as immaterial and spiritual as the soul itself, and more immediate to the mystery of the nativity. This soul is of the same nature and substance with ours; in this inferior to the angels, that of itself it is incomplete, and discursive in a lower order of ratiocination; but in this superior:—1, That it is per-

sonally united to the divinity, full of the Holy Ghost, overrunning with grace, which was dispensed to it without measure. (And by the mediation of this union, as itself is exalted far above all orders of intelligencies, so we also have contracted alliances with God, teaching us not to unravel our excellencies by infamous deportments.)

2. Here also we may meditate, that his memory is indeterminable and unalterable, ever remembering to do us good, and to present our needs to God by the means of his holy intercession. 3. That his understanding is without ignorance, knowing the secrets of our hearts, full of mysterious secrets of his Father's kingdom, in 'which all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God are hidden.' 4. That his will is impeccable, entertained with an uninterrupted act of love to God, greater than all angels and beatified spirits, present to God in the midst of the transportations and ravishments of paradise: that this will is full of love to us, of humility in itself, of conformity to God, wholly resigned by acts of adoration and obedience. It was moved by six wings; zeal of the honour of God, and compunction for our sins, pity to our miseries, and hatred of our impieties, desires of satisfying the wrath of God, and great joy at the consideration of all the fruits of his nativity, the appeasing of his Father, the redemption of his brethren. And upon these wings he mounted up into the throne of glory, carrying our nature with him above the seats of angels. These second considerations present themselves to all that with piety and devotion behold the holy Babe lying in the obscure and humble place of his nativity.

THE PRAYER.

Holy and immortal Jesus, I adore and worship thee with the lowest prostrations and humility of soul and body, and give thee all thanks for that great love to us whereof thy nativity hath made demonstrations ; for that humility of thine expressed in the poor and ignoble circumstances which thou didst voluntarily choose in the manner of thy birth. And I present to thy holy humanity, inclosed in the adorable divinity, my body and soul ; humbly desiring, that as thou didst clothe thyself with a human body, thou mayest invest me with the robes of righteousness, covering my sins, enabling my weaknesses, and sustaining my mortality, till I shall finally, in conformity to thy beauties and perfections, be clothed with the stole of glory. Amen.

II.

Vouchsafe to come to me by a more intimate and spiritual approximation, that so thou mayest lead me to thy Father ; for of myself I cannot move one step towards thee. Take me by the hand, place me in thy heart, that there I may live, and there I may die : that as thou hast united our nature to thy eternal being, thou mightest also unite my person to thine by the interior adunations of love, and obedience, and conformity. Let thy ears be open to my prayers, thy merciful eyes look upon my miseries, thy holy hands be stretched out to my relief and succour. Let some of those precious distilling tears which nature, and thy compassion, and thy sufferings did cause to distil and drop from those sacred fontinels, water my stony heart, and make it soft, apt for the impressions of a melting, obedient, and corresponding love ; and moisten mine eyes, that I may, upon thy stock of pity and weeping, mourn for my sins ; that so my tears and sorrows, being drops of water coming from that holy rock, may indeed be united unto thine, and made precious by such holy mixtures. Amen.

III.

Blessed Jesus, now that thou hast sanctified and exalted human nature, and made even my body precious, by a personal uniting it to the divinity, teach me so reverently to account of it, that I

may not dare to profane it with impure lusts or captive affections, and unhallow that ground where thy holy feet have trodden. Give to me ardent desires, and efficacious prosecutions of those holy effects which thou didst design for us in thy nativity, and other parts of our redemption. Give me great confidence in thee, which thou hast encouraged by the exhibition of so glorious favours; great sorrow and confusion of face at the sight of mine own imperfections, and estrangements, and great distances from thee, and the perfections of thy soul; and bring me to thee by the strictnesses of a zealous and affectionate imitation of those sanctities, which, next to thy hypostatical union, added lustre and excellency to the humanity: that I may live here with thee in the expresses of a holy life, and die with thee by mortification and an unwearied patience, and reign with thee in immortal glories world without end. Amen.

DISCOURSE I.

Of Nursing Children, in imitation of the blessed Virgin Mother.

1. THESE latter ages of the world have declined into a softness above the effeminacy of Asian princes, and have contracted customs which those innocent and healthful days of our ancestors knew not, whose piety was natural, whose charity was operative, whose policy was just and valiant, and whose economy was sincere and proportionable to the dispositions and requisites of nature. And in this particular the good women of old gave one of their instances;¹ the greatest personages nursed their own children, did the work of mothers, and

¹ Quod si pudica mulier in partem juvet Domum atque dulces liberos: (Sabina qualis, aut perusta solibus Pernicis uxor Appuli;) Non me Lucrina juverint conchyliis magis, &c. Hor. Epod. ii.

thought it was unlikely women should become virtuous by ornaments and superadditions of morality, who did decline the laws and prescriptions of nature, whose principles supply us with the first and most common rules of manners and more perfect actions. In imitation of whom, and especially the virgin Mary, who was mother and nurse to the holy Jesus, I shall endeavour to correct those softnesses and unnatural rejections of children, which are popular up to a custom and fashion, even where no necessities of nature or just reason can make excuse.

2. And I cannot think the question despicable, and the duty of meanest consideration; although it be specified in an office of small esteem, and suggested to us by the principles of reason, and not by express sanctions of divinity. For although other actions are more perfect and spiritual, yet this is more natural and humane: other things being superadded to a full duty rise higher; but this builds stronger, and is like a part of the foundation, having no lustre, but much strength: and however the others are full of ornament, yet this hath in it some degrees of necessity, and possibly is with more danger and irregularity omitted, than actions which spread their leaves fairer, and look more gloriously.

3. First, Here I consider that there are many sins in the scene of the body and the matter of sobriety which are highly criminal, and yet the laws of God expressed in Scripture name them not; but men are taught to distinguish them by that reason which is given us by nature, and is imprinted in our understanding in order to the conservation of human kind. For since every crea-

ture hath something in it sufficient to propagate the kind, and to conserve the individuals from perishing in confusions and general disorders, which in beasts we call instinct, that is, an habitual prime disposition to do certain things which are proportionable to the end whither it is designed. Man also, if he be not more imperfect, must be the like : and because he knows and makes reflections upon his own acts, and understands the reason of it, that which in them is instinct, in him is natural reason,¹ which is a desire to preserve himself and his own kind ; and differs from instinct, because he understands his instinct and the reasonableness of it, and they do not. But man being an higher thing even in the order of creation, and designed to a more noble end in his animal capacity, his argumentative instinct is larger than the natural instinct of beasts : for he hath instincts in him in order to the conservation of society, and therefore hath principles, that is, he hath natural desires for his own good ; and because he understands them, they are called principles and laws of nature, but are no other than what I have now declared for beasts do the same things we do, and he hath many the same inclinations, which in us are laws of nature, even all which we have in order to our common end. But that which in beasts is nature and an impulsive force, in us must be desire and an inviting power : we must do the same things with an actual or habitual designation to that end to which God designs beasts ; (supply

¹ Naturale jus partim τὸ δίκαιον, πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ὁμολυσιτελέεσθαι· partim τὸ πρὸς καλοκᾶ γαθίαν, κοινὸν ἔπαινον, ἃ μόνον ἱκανὸν διασώζειν τὸν τῶν ἀνθρώπων βίον. *Joan Orig.* xvi. 10.

by his wisdom their want of understanding;) and then what is mere nature in them, in us is natural reason. And therefore marriage in men is made sacred, when the mixtures of other creatures are so merely natural that they are not capable of being virtuous; because men are bound to intend that end which God made. And this, with the superaddition of other ends, of which marriage is representative in part, and in part effective, does consecrate marriage, and makes it holy and mysterious. But then there are in marriage many duties which we are taught by instinct; that is, by that reason whereby we understand what are the best means to promote the end which we have assigned us. And by these laws all unnatural mixtures are made unlawful, and the decencies which are to be observed in marriage are prescribed by this.

4. Secondly, Upon the supposition of this discourse, I consider again, that although to observe this instinct of these laws of nature (in which I have now instanced) be no great virtue in any eminency of degree; (as no man is much commended for not killing himself, or for not degenerating into beastly lusts;) yet to prevaricate some of these laws may become almost the greatest sin in the world. And therefore, although to live according to nature be a testimony fit to be given to a sober and temperate man, and rises no higher; yet to do an action against nature is the greatest dishonour and impiety in the world, (I mean of actions whose scene lies in the body,) and disentitles us to all relations to God, and vicinity to virtue.

5. Thirdly, Now, amongst actions which we are taught by nature, some concern the being and the

necessities of nature, some appertain to convenience and advantage: and the transgressions of these respectively have their heightenings; and therefore to kill a man is with some preternatural pollutions, because destructive of the end and designation of nature, the purpose of instinct.

6. Fourthly, Every part of this instinct in some sense a law, when it is in a direction to a necessary end, and by that is made necessary. I say, in some sense, it is a law, that is, a near disposition to become a law. It is without obligation to a particular punishment beyond the effect of the natural inordinatiness and irregularity of the act; it is not the measure of good or evil, but of the natural, that is common to all. For if in the individuals it should be so, or that there pass some greater obligation upon a person in order to a higher end, not consistent with those means designed in order to the lower end, in that particular it is no fault, but a virtue. And therefore although it be as contrary or reasonable towards many purposes, yet if one should beget a man in his own image, in order to the preservation of nature: yet if there be a superaddition of another and higher end, contrary means persuaded in order to it, (such as holy celibate or virginity in order to a spiritual end in some persons,) there the instinct of nature is far from passing obligation upon the contrary, and in that instance ceases to be reasonable. Therefore the Romans, who invited marriage with privileges, and punished more ungentle natures that refused it, yet spared chaste and unmarried vestals: the first, in

the commonwealth; these, in a nearer order to religion.

" 7. Fifthly, These instincts or reasonable inducements become laws, obliging us in conscience and in the way of religion; and the breach of them is directly criminal, when the instance violates any end of justice, or charity, or sobriety, either designed in nature's first intention, or superinduced by God or man. For every thing that is unreasonable to some certain purpose, is not presently criminal, much less is it against the law of nature; (unless every man that goes out of his way sins against the law of nature;) and every contradicting of a natural desire or inclination is not a sin against a law of nature. For the restraining sometimes of a lawful and a permitted desire is an act of great virtue, and pursues a greater reason; as in the former instance. But those things only against which such a reason as mixes with charity or justice, or something that is now in order to a further end of a commanded instance of piety, may be without error brought, those things are only criminal. And God having first made our instincts reasonable, hath now made our reason and instincts to be spiritual; and having sometimes restrained our instincts, and always made them regular, he hath, by the intermixture of other principles, made a separation of instinct from instinct, leaving one in the form of natural inclination, and they rise no higher than a permission or a decency, it is lawful, it is comely so to do: (for no man can affirm it to be a duty to kill him that assaults my life, or to maintain my children for ever without their own industry, when they are able, what degrees of natural fondness soever I have towards them; nor

that I sin, if I do not marry, when I can contain :) and yet every one of these may proceed from the affections and first inclinations of nature. But until they mingle with justice, or charity, or some instance of religion and obedience, they are no laws: the other that are so mingled being raised to duty and religion. Nature inclines us, and reason judges it apt and requisite in order to certain ends; but then every particular of it is made to be an act of religion from some other principle: as yet, it is but fit and reasonable, not religion and particular duty, till God or man hath interposed. But whatsoever particular in nature was fit to be made a law of religion, is made such by the super-addition of another principle: and this is derived to us by tradition from Adam to Noah, or else transmitted to us by the consent of all the world upon a natural and prompt reason, or else by some other instrument derived to us from God, but especially by the Christian religion, which hath adopted all those things which we call 'things honest, things comely, and things of good report,' into a law and a duty, as appears Phil. iv. 8.

8. Upon these propositions I shall infer, by way of instance, that it is a duty that women should nurse their own children. For first, it is taught to women by that instinct which nature hath implanted in them. For, as Phavorinus the philosopher discoursed, it is but to be half a mother to bring forth children, and not to nourish them:¹ and it is some kind of abortion, or an exposing of the infant, which in the reputation of all wise nations is infamous and uncharitable. And if the

¹ Apud A. Gellium, lib. xii. c. 1.

name of mother be an appellative of affections and endearments, why should the mother be willing to divide it with a stranger? The earth is the mother of us all, not only because we were made of her red clay, but chiefly that she daily gives us food from her bowels and breasts; and plants and beasts give nourishment to their offsprings, after their production, with greater tenderness than they bare them in their wombs; and yet women give nourishment to the embryo, which whether it be deformed or perfect they know not, and cannot love what they never saw: and yet when they do see it, when they have rejoiced that a child is born, and forgotten the sorrows of production, they who then can first begin to love it, if they begin to divorce the infant from the mother, the object from the affection, cut off the opportunities and occasions of their charity or piety.

9. For why hath nature given to women two exuberant fontinels, which, 'like two roes that are twins, feed among the lilies,'¹ and drop milk like dew from Hermon, and hath invited that nourishment from the secret recesses where the infant dwelt at first, up to the breast,² where naturally now the child is cradled in the entertainments of love and maternal embraces; but that nature, having removed the babe, and carried its meat after it, intends it should be preserved by the matter and ingredients of its constitution, and have the same diet prepared with a

¹ Cent. iv. 5.

² *Illicet exundans claustris, erumpere gestit*
Humor. —————

Si prohibes, furit in mammis, turbásque dolorum
Miscet, et ingrata pãnas à matre reposcit.

Sammarth. Pædotroph.

more mature and proportionable digestion ?¹ If nature intended them not for nourishment, I am sure it less intended them for pride and wantonness : they are needless excrescences and vices of nature, unless employed in nature's work and proper intendment. And if it be a matter of consideration of what blood children are derived, we may also consider, that the derivation continues after the birth, and therefore, abating the sensuality, the nurse is as much the mother as she that brought it forth ; and so much the more, as there is a longer communication of constituent nourishment (for so are the first emanations) in this than in the other. So that here is first the instinct or prime intendment of nature.

10. Secondly, And that this instinct may also become human and reasonable, we see it by experience in many places, that foster-children are dearer to the nurse than to the mother, as receiving and ministering respectively perpetual prettinesses of love, and fondness, and trouble, and need, and invitations, and all the instruments of endearment ; besides a vicinity of dispositions and relative tempers, by the communication of blood and spirits from the nurse to the suckling, which makes use the more natural, and nature more accustomed. And therefore the affections which these exposed or derelict children bear to their mothers have no grounds of nature or assiduity, but civility and opinion ; and that little of love which is abated from the foster-parents upon public report that they are not natural, that little is

¹ Sponte fluunt alimenta suis accommoda rebus,
Cognatúmque bibunt membra haud invita liquorem.

Sammarth. Pædotroph.

transferred to mothers upon the same opinion, and no more.¹ Hence come those unnatural aversions, those unrelenting dispositions, those carelessnesses and incurious deportments towards their children, which are such ill-sown seeds, from whence may arise up a bitterness of disposition and mutual provocation. The affection which children bear to their nurses was highly remarked in the instance of Scipio Asiaticus, who rejected the importunity of his brother Africanus in behalf of the ten captains who were condemned for offering violence to the vestals, but pardoned them at the request of his foster-sister : and being asked why he did more for his nurse's daughter than for his own mother's son, gave this answer, "I esteem her rather to be my mother that brought me up, than her that bare me and forsook me." And I have read the observation, that many tyrants have killed their mothers, but never any did violence to his nurse ; as if they were desirous to suck the blood of their mother raw, which she refused to give to them digested into milk. And the bastard-brother of the Gracchi, returning from his victories in Asia to Rome, presented his mother with a jewel of silver, and his nurse with a girdle of gold, upon the same account. Sometimes children are exchanged, and artificial bastardies introduced into a family, and the right heir supplanted. It happened so to Artabanus, king of Epirus ; his child was changed at nurse, and the son of a mean knight succeeded in the kingdom. The event of which was this : the nurse too late discovered the treason ; a bloody war was commenced, both the pretenders slain in battle, and the kingdom itself was usurped by Alexander, the brother to Olympias, the wife of Philip the

¹ Phavor. apud. A. Gellium.

Macedonian. At the best, though there happen no such extravagant and rare accidents, yet it is not likely a stranger should love the child better than the mother: and if the mother's care could suffer it to be exposed, a stranger's care may suffer it to be neglected. For how shall a hireling endure the inconveniences, the tediousnesses and unhandsonenesses of a nursery, when she whose natural affection might have made it pleasant, out of wantonness or softness, hath declined the burden? But the sad accidents which by too frequent observation are daily seen happening to nurse-children, give great probation, that this intendment of nature designing mothers to be the nurses, that their affection might secure and increase their care, and the care best provide for their babes, is most reasonable, and proportionable to the discourses of humanity.

11. But as this instinct was made reasonable, so in this also the reason is in order to grace and spiritual effects; and therefore is among those things which God hath separated from the common instincts of nature, and made properly to be laws, by the mixtures of justice and charity. For it is part of that education which mothers as a duty owe to their children, that they do in all circumstances, and with all their powers which God to that purpose gave them, promote their capacities and improve their faculties.¹ Now in this also, as the temper of the body is considerable in order to the inclinations of the soul, so is the nurse in order to the temper of the body: and a lamb sucking a goat, or a kid sucking an ewe, change their fleece and hair respectively, say naturalists. For if the

¹ Quint. lib i. c. 1. Hippocrat. l. de Alimento. καθάρσις αἱ τρεθαίγες, σιτίσεις κακῶς. Aristoph.

soul of man were put into the body of a mole, it could not see nor speak, because it is not fitted with an instrument apt and organical to the faculty : and when the soul hath its proper instruments, its music is pleasant or harsh according to the sweetness or the unevenness of the string it touches : for David himself could not have charmed Saul's melancholic spirit with the strings of his bow, or the wood of his spear. And just so are the actions or dispositions of the soul, angry or pleasant, lustful or cold, querulous or passionate, according as the body is disposed by the various intermixtures of natural qualities. And as the carelessness of nurses hath sometimes returned children to their parents crooked, consumptive, half-starved, and unclean from the impurities of nature ; so their society and their nourishment together have disposed them to peevishness, to lust, to drunkenness, to pride, to low and base demeanours, to stubbornness. And as a man would have been unwilling to have a child by Harpaste, Seneca's wife's fool, so he would in all reason be as unwilling to have had her to be the nurse : for very often mothers by the birth do not transmit their imperfections, yet it seldom happens but the nurse does. Which is the more considerable, because nurses are commonly persons of no great rank, certainly lower than the mother, and by consequence liker to return their children with the lower and more servile conditions : and commonly those vainer people teach them to be peevish and proud, to lie, or at least seldom give them any first principles contrariant to the nurse's vice. And therefore it concerns the parent's care, in order to a virtuous life of the child, to secure its first seasonings ; because

whatever it sucks in first, it swallows and believes infinitely, and practises easily, and continues longest. And this is more proper for a mother's care, while the nurse thinks that giving the child suck, and keeping its body clean is all her duty; but the mother cannot think herself so easily discharged. And this consideration is material in all cases, be the choice of the nurse never so prudent and curious; and it is not easily apprehended to be the portion of her care to give it spiritual milk; and therefore it intrenches very much upon impiety and positive relinquishing the education of their children, when mothers expose the spirit of the child either to its own weaker inclinations, or the wicked principles of an ungodly nurse, or the carelessness of any less-obliged person.

12. And then let me add, that a child sucks the nurse's milk, and digests her conditions, if they be never so bad, seldom gets any good.* For virtue being superaddition to nature, and perfections not radical in the body, but contradictions to and meliorations of natural indispositions, does not easily convey itself by ministrations of food, as vice does, which in most instances is nothing but mere nature grown to custom, and not mended by grace; so that it is probable enough, such natural distemperatures may pass in the rivulets of milk, like evil-spirits in a white garment; when virtues are of harder purchase, and dwell so low in the heart, that they but rarely pass through the fountains of generation. And therefore let no

* Ἄλλοτε μητρυνὴ πίνει ἡμέρη, ἄλλοτε μήτηρ. *Fictum Proverb.*

* *Hyrcanæque admorunt ubera tigres. Virgil. λαινας μασθῶν ἰθὺλαζει.*

mother venture her child upon a stranger, whose heart she less knows than her own. And because few of those nicer women think better of others than themselves, (since out of self-love they neglect their own bowels,) it is but an act of providence, to let my child derive imperfections from one, of whom I have not so good an opinion as of myself.

13. And if those many blessings and holy prayers which the child needs, or his askings or sicknesses, or the mother's fears or joys respectively do occasion, should not be cast into this account; yet those principles which, in all cases wherein the neglect is vicious, are the causes of the exposing the child, are extremely against the piety and charity of Christian religion, which prescribes severity and austere deportment, and the labours of love, and exemplar tenderness of affections and piety to children, which are the most natural and nearest relations the parents have. That religion which commands us to visit and to tend sick strangers, and to wash the feet of the poor, and dress their ulcers, and sends us upon charitable embassies into unclean prisons, and bids us lay down our lives for one another, is not pleased with a niceness and sensual curiosity (that I may not name the wantonnesses of lusts) which denies suck to our own children. What is more humane and affectionate than Christianity? and what is less natural and charitable than to deny the expresses of a mother's affection? which certainly to good women is the greatest trouble in the world, and the greatest violence to their desires, if they should not express and minister.

14. And it would be considered, whether those mothers who have neglected their first duties of

piety and charity, can expect so prompt and easy returns of duty and piety from their children, whose best foundation is love, and that love strongest which is most natural, and that most natural which is conveyed by the first ministries and impresses of nourishment and education. And if love descends more strongly than it ascends, and commonly falls from the parents upon the children in cataracts, and returns back again up to the parents but in gentle dews; if the child's affection keeps the same proportions towards such unkind mothers, it will be as little as atoms in the sun, and never express itself but when the mother needs it not, that is, in the sunshine of a clear fortune.

15. This then is amongst those instincts which are natural, heightened first by reason, and then exalted by grace into the obligation of a law: and being amongst the sanctions of nature, its prevarication is a crime very near those sins which divines, in detestation of their malignity, call sins against nature, and is never to be excused but in cases of necessity¹ or greater charity; as when the mother cannot be a nurse by reason of natural disability, or is afflicted with a disease which might be transmitted in the milk, or in case of the public necessities of a kingdom, for the securing of succession in the royal family. And yet, concerning this last, Lycurgus made a law, that the noblest among the Spartan women, though their kings' wives, should at least nurse their eldest son, and the Plebeians should nurse all theirs: and Plutarch reports, that the second son of king Themistes inherited the kingdom in Sparta, only because he

¹ *Necessitas magnum imbecillitatis humanæ patrociniū, quicquid cogit excusat.* Sen.—“Great necessity is the support of human imbecility: it excuses whatever it compels.”

was nursed with his mother's milk, and the eldest was therefore rejected, because a stranger was his nurse. And that queens have suckled and nursed their own children, is no very unusual kindness in the simplicity and hearty affections of elder ages, as is to be seen in Herodotus and other historians : I shall only remark one instance out of the Spanish chronicles, which Henry Stephens, in his apology for Herodotus, reports to have heard from thence, related by a noble personage, Monsieur Marillac ; that a Spanish lady married into France nursed her child with so great a tenderness and jealousy, that having understood the little prince once to have sucked a stranger, she was unquiet till she had forced him to vomit it up again. In other cases the crime lies at their door who enforce neglect upon the other, and is heightened in proportion to the motive of the omission : as if wantonness or pride be the parent of the crime, the issue, besides its natural deformity, hath the excrescencies of pride or lust to make it more ugly.

16. To such mothers I propound the example of the holy virgin, who had the honour to be visited by an angel, yet, after the example of the saints in the Old Testament, she gave to the holy Jesus drink from those bottles which himself had filled for his own drinking ; and her paps were as surely blessed for giving him suck, as her womb for bearing him ; and reads a lecture of piety and charity, which if we deny to our children, there is then in the world left no argument or relation great enough to kindle it from a cinder to a flame. God gives dry breasts, for a curse to some, for an affliction to others ; but those that invite it to them by voluntary arts, ' love not blessing, therefore shall it be far from them.' And I remember that it was said

concerning Annius Minutius the censor, that he thought it a prodigy and extremely ominous to Rome, that a Roman lady refused to nurse her child, and yet gave suck to a puppy, that her milk might with more safety be dried up with artificial applications. Let none therefore divide the interests of their own children : for she that appeared before Solomon, and would have the child divided, was not the true mother, and was the more culpable of the two.

THE PRAYER.

O holy and eternal God, Father of the creatures, and King of all the world, who hast imprinted in all the souls of thy creation principles and abilities to serve the end of their own preservation, and to men hast superadded reason, making those first propensities of nature to be reasonable in order to society, and a conversation in communities and bodies politic, and hast, by several laws and revelations directed our reasons to nearer applications to thee, and performance of thy great end, the glory of our Lord and Father ; teach me strictly to observe the order of creation, and the designs of the creatures, that in my order I may do that service which every creature does in its proper capacity. Lord. let me be as constant in the ways of religion as the sun in his course, as ready to follow the intimations of thy Spirit as little birds are to obey the directions of thy providence and the conduct of thy hand ; and let me never, by evil customs, or vain company, or false persuasions, extinguish those principles of morality and right reason which thou hast imprinted in my understanding, in my creation and education, and which thou hast ennobled by the superadditions of Christian institution : that I may live according to the rules of nature in such things which she teaches, modestly, temperately, and affectionately, in all the parts of my natural and political relations ; and that I, proceeding from nature to grace, may henceforth go on from grace to glory, the crown of all obedience, prudent and holy walking, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SECTION IV.

of great and glorious Accidents happening about the Birth of Jesus.

ALTHOUGH the birth of Christ was destitute of the usual excrescencies and less necessary signs which used to signify and illustrate the birth of princes; yet his first humility was made illustrious with presages, miracles, and significations from heaven, which did not only, like the furniture of a princely bed-chamber, speak the riches of the birth, or greatness of the Son within its own womb, but did declare to all the world that their King was born, publishing it with figures, and circumstances almost as great as its empire.

For when all the world did expect that in Judea should be born their Prince, and that the illustrious world had in their observation slipped by their true Prince, because he came not in pompous and secular illustrations; upon that very stock which the eastern nation was nursed up in hope of the Roman Empire,¹ and that hope made him great in designs, they being prosperous made his fortunes correspond to his hopes, and he was endeared and endeared upon that fortune by the prophecy which never intended him by the prophet. But the greatness of the Roman monarchy was not great enough for this Prince designed by the old prophecy. And therefore it was not without the influence of a divinity, that his predecessor, Augustus,

Sueton. in Vita Vesp. Vide etiam Ciceron. de Divin.

about the time of Christ's nativity, refused to be called Lord.¹ Possibly it was to entertain the people with some hopes of restitution of their liberties, till he had griped the monarchy with a stricter and faster hold: but the Christians were apt to believe, that it was upon the prophecy of a Sybil foretelling the birth of a greater Prince, to whom all the world should pay adoration. And that the Prince was about that time born in Judæa, the oracle which was dumb to Augustus's question, told him unasked, the devil having no tongue permitted him, but once to proclaim, that "an Hebrew child was his lord and enemy."²

3. At the birth of which child there was an universal peace through all the world. For then it was that Augustus Cæsar, having composed all the wars of the world, did the third time cause the gates of Janus's temple to be shut: and this peace continued for twelve years,³ even till the extreme old age of the prince, until rust had sealed the temple doors, which opened not until the sedition of the Athenians and the rebellion of the Dacians caused Augustus to arm. For he that was born was the Prince of Peace, and came to reconcile God with man, and man with his brother; and to make, by the sweetness of his example, and the influence of a holy doctrine, such happy atonements between disagreeing natures, such confederations and societies between enemies, that 'the wolf and the lamb should lie down together, and a little child,' boldly and without danger 'put his finger in the nest and cavern of an asp.'⁴ And it could be

¹ Orosius, lib. vi. c. 22.

² Sudias, in histor. Verb. Augustus.

³ Orosius.

⁴ Isa. xi. 6, 8.

no less than miraculous, that so great a body as the Roman empire, consisting of so many parts, whose constitutions were differing, their humours contrary, their interests contradicting each other's greatness, and all these violently oppressed by an usurping power, should have no limb out of joint, not so much as an aching tooth or a rebelling humour in that huge collection of parts : but so it seemed good in the eye of heaven, by so great and good a symbol to declare not only the greatness, but the goodness of the Prince that was then born in Judæa, the Lord of all the world.

4. But because the heavens, as well as the earth, are his creatures, and do serve him, at his birth he received a sign in heaven above, as well as in the earth beneath, as an homage paid to their common Lord. For as certain 'shepherds were keeping watch over their flocks by night,' near that part where Jacob did use to feed his cattle when he was in the land of Canaan, 'the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them.' Needs must the shepherds be afraid, when an angel came arrayed in glory, and clothed their persons in a robe of light, great enough to confound their senses and scatter their understandings. But 'the angel said unto them, Fear not, for I bring unto you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.' The shepherds needed not be invited to go see this glorious sight ; but lest their fancy should rise up to an expectation of a prince as externally glorious as might be hoped for upon the consequence of so glorious an apparition, the angel, to prevent the mistake, told them of a sign,

which indeed was no other than the thing signified ; but yet was therefore a sign, because it was so remote from the common probability and expectation of such a birth, that by being a miracle so great a Prince should be born so poorly, it became an instrument to signify itself and all the other parts of mysterious consequence. For the angel said, ' This shall be a sign unto you, ye shall find the babe wrapt in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.'

5. But as light, when it first begins to gild the east, scatters indeed the darkneses from the earth but ceases not to increase its flame till it hath made perfect day ; so it happened now in this apparition of the angel of light. He appeared, and told his message and did shine ; but the light arose higher and higher, till midnight was as bright as mid-day. For ' suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host : ' and after the angel had told his message in plain song, the whole chorus joined in descant, and sang an hymn to the tune and sense of heaven, where glory is paid to God in eternal and never-ceasing offices, and whence good will descends upon men in perpetual and never-stopping torrents. Their song was, ' Glory be to God on high, on earth peace, good will towards men. By this song not only referring to the strange peace which at that time put all the world in ease but to the great peace which this new-born Prince should make between his Father and all mankind.

6. As soon as these blessed choristers had sung their Christmas carol and taught the church the hymn to put into her offices for ever, in the anniversary of this festivity, the angels returned into heaven, and the shepherds went to Bethlehem, to see

this thing which the Lord had made known unto them. And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. Just as the angel had prepared their expectation, they found the narrative verified, and saw the glory and the mystery of it by that representment which was made by the heavenly ministers, seeing God through the veil of a child's flesh, the heir of heaven wrapped in swaddling clothes, and a person to whom the angels did minister laid in a manger : and they beheld, and wondered, and worshipped.

7. But as precious liquor warmed and heightened by a flame first crowns the vessel, and then dances over its brim into the fire, increasing the cause of its own motion and extravagancy ; so it happened to the shepherds, whose hearts being filled with the oil of gladness up unto the brim, the joy ran over, as being too big to be confined in their own breasts, and did communicate itself, growing greater by such dissemination : for ' when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And (as well they might) all that heard it wondered.' But Mary, having first changed her joy into wonder, turned her wonder into entertainments of the mystery, and the mystery into fruition and cohabitation with it : for ' Mary kept all these sayings, and pondered them in her heart.' And the shepherds, having seen what the angels did upon the publication of the news, which less concerned them than us, had learned their duty, to sing an honour to God for the nativity of Christ : for ' the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.'

8. But the angels had told the shepherds that the nativity was 'glad tidings of great joy unto all people : ' and, that ' the heavens might declare the glory of God, and the firmament show his handy work, ' this also was told abroad even to the Gentiles by a sign from heaven, by the message of a star. For there was a prophecy of Balaam famous in all the eastern country, and recorded by Moses, ' there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre arise out of Israel : out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion. ' ¹ Which, although in its first sense it signified David, who was the conqueror of the Moabites ; yet, in its more mysterious and chiefly intended sense, it related to the Son of David. And in expectation of the event of this prophecy, the Arabians, the sons of Abraham by Keturah, whose portion given by their patriarch was gold, frankincense, and myrrh, who were great lovers of astronomy, did, with diligence, expect the revelation of a mighty prince in Judæa at such a time when a miraculous and extraordinary star should appear. ' And ' therefore, when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa, in the days of Herod the king, there came wise men, ' inspired by God, taught by art, and persuaded by prophecy, ' from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews ? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. ' The Greeks suppose this, which was called a star, to have been indeed an angel in a pillar of fire, and the semblance of a star ; and it is made the more likely, by coming and standing directly over the humble roof of his nativity, which is not discernible in the station of a

¹ Num. xxiv. 17.

² Epiphan. in Expos. Fid. Cath. c. 8.

scribes of the people together, and demanded of them where Christ should be born; and found by their joint determination, that Bethlehem of Judæa was the place designed by ancient prophecy and God's decree. Next he enquired of the wise men concerning the star, but privily what time it appeared. For the star had not motion circular and regular, by the laws of nature;¹ but it so guided the wise men in their journey, that it stood when they stood, moved not when they rested, and went forward when they were able, making no more haste than they did, who carried much of the business and employment of the star along with them. But when Herod was satisfied in his questions, he sent them to Bethlehem, with instructions to search diligently for the young child, and bring him word, pretending that he would come and worship him also.

11. The wise men prosecuted the business of their journey, and 'having heard the king, they departed, and the star (which as it seems attended their motion) went before them until it came and stood over where the young child was; where, when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.' Such a joy as is usual to wearied travellers when they are entering into their inn; such a joy as when our hopes and greatest longings are laying hold upon the proper objects of their desires; a joy of certainty immediately before the possession: for that is the greatest joy, which possesses before it is satisfied, and rejoices with a joy not abated by the surfeits of possession, but heightened with all the apprehensions and fancies of hope, and the

¹ Leo. Serm. iv. de Epiphan.

neighbourhood of fruition ; a joy of nature, of wonder, and of religion. And now their hearts laboured with a throng of spirits and passions, and ran into the house to the embracement of Jesus even before their feet. But ‘ when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother.’ And possibly their expectation was something lessened, and their wonder heightened, when they saw their hope empty of pomp and gaiety, the great King’s throne to be a manger, a stable to his chamber of presence, a thin court, and no ministers, and the King himself a pretty babe ; and, but that he had a star over his head, nothing to distinguish him from the common condition of children, or to excuse him from the miseries of a poor and empty fortune.

12. This did not scandalize those wise persons, but being convinced by that testimony from heaven, and the union of all circumstances, they fell down and worshipped him, after the manner of the Easterlings when they do veneration to their kings ; not with an empty *Ave* and gay blessing of fine words, but they bring presents, and come into his courts : for when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And if these gifts were mysterious beyond the acknowledgment of him to be the King of the Jews, and Christ that should come into the world ;¹ frankincense might signify him to be acknowledged a God, myrrh to be a man, and gold to be a king. Unless we choose by gold to signify the acts of mercy ; by myrrh, the chastity of our minds and purity of our bodies, to the incorruption

¹ S. Ambros. in 2 Luc. 6. Leo. Ser. de Epiph. Theophyl. in Matt. 2. S. Bernard. in Sermon. 2, de Epiph.

of which myrrh is especially instrumental ; and by incense we intend our prayers,¹ as the most apt presents and oblations to the honour and service of this young King. But however the fancies of religion may represent variety of ideas, the act of adoration was direct and religious ; and the myrrh was medicinal to his tender body ; the incense possibly no more than was necessary in a stable, the first throne of his humility ; and the gold was a good antidote against the present indigencies of his poverty : presents such as were used in all the Levant, (especially in Arabia and Saba, to which the growth of myrrh and frankincense was proper,) in their addresses to their God and to their king, and were instruments with which, under the veil of flesh, they worshipped the eternal Word ; the wisdom of God under infant innocence, the almighty power in so great weakness, and under the lowness of human nature, the altitude of majesty and the infinity of divine glory. And so was verified the prediction of the prophet Isaiah, under the type of the son of the prophetess : ‘ Before a child shall have knowledge to cry, my father and my mother, he shall take the spoil of Damascus and Samaria from before the king of Assyria.’²

13. When they had paid the tribute of their offerings and adoration, ‘ being warned in their sleep by an angel not to return to Herod, they returned into their own country another way :’ where (having been satisfied with the pleasures of religion, and taught by that rare demonstration which was made by Christ, how man’s happiness

¹ Phil. iv. 18 ; Psal. cxli. 2 ; Revel. v. 8.

² Isa. viii. 4 ; Justin. M. Dial. cum Tryphon. ; Tertul. lib. iii. contra Marcion. c. 13.

nothing at all consist in the affluence of worldly possessions, or the tumours of honour; (having seen the eternal Son of God poor and weak, unclothed of all exterior ornaments) they quitted the world, and retired empty into the bosoms of religion and the delights of philosophy.

AD. SECTION IV.

Considerations upon the apparition of the Angels to the Shepherds.

WHEN the angels saw that come to pass, that Gabriel, the great ambassador of God, had appeared, that which had been prayed for and expected four thousand years, and that by the means of this new-born Prince their younger brethren inferiors in the order of intelligent creatures were now to be redeemed, that men should participate the glories of their secret habitations, and should fill up those void places which the fall of Lucifer and the third part of the stars had made; their joy, was great as their understanding, and the mountains did leap with joy because the valleys were filled with benediction and a fruitful harvest from heaven. And if at the 'conversion of the sinner there is jubilation' and a festival kept among the angels; how great shall we imagine rejoicing to be, when salvation and redemption are sent to all the world! But we also, to whom the Saviour did more personally relate, (for they relate for our sakes,) should learn to estimate the value of what is done us, and believe there is something very extraordinary in the piety and salvation of a man,

when the angels, who in respect of us are unconcerned in the communications, rejoice with the joy of conquerors, or persons suddenly ransomed from tortures and death.

2. But the angels also had other motions: for besides the pleasures of that joy which they had in beholding human nature so highly exalted, and that God was man, and man was God; they were transported with admiration at the ineffable counsel of God's predestination, prostrating themselves with adoration and modesty, seeing God so humbled, and man so changed, and so full of charity, that God stooped to the condition of man, and man was inflamed beyond the love of seraphims, and was made more knowing than cherubims, more established than thrones, more happy than all the orders of angels. The issue of this consideration teaches us to learn their charity, and to exterminate all the intimations and beginnings of envy, that we may as much rejoice at the good of others as of ourselves: for then we love good for God's sake, when we love good wherever God hath placed it; and that joy is charitable which overflows our neighbour's fields, when ourselves are unconcerned in the personal accruments. For so we are 'made partakers of all that fear God,' when charity unites their joy to ours, as it makes us partakers of their common sufferings.

3. And now the angels, who had adored the holy Jesus in heaven, come also to pay their homage to him upon earth; and laying aside their flaming swords, they take into their hands instruments of music, and sing, 'Glory be to God on high.' First signifying to us, that the incarnation of the holy Jesus was a very great instrument of

he glorification of God, and those divine perfections in which he is chiefly pleased to communicate himself to us, were in nothing manifested so much as in the mysteriousness of this work. Secondly, and in vain doth man satisfy himself with complacencies and ambitious designs upon earth, when he sees before him God in the form of a servant, humble, and poor, and crying, and an infant, full of need and weakness.

4. But God hath pleased to reconcile his glory with our eternal benefit; and that also was part of the angels' song, 'In earth peace to men of good will.' For now we need not with Adam to fly from the presence of the Lord, saying, 'I heard thy voice, and I was afraid, and hid myself:' for he from whom our sins made us once to fly, now creeps, and is an infant in his mother's arms; seeking strange means to be reconciled to us, hath forgotten all his anger, and is swallowed up with love, and encircled with irradiations of amorous affections and good will. And the effects of this good will are not referred only to persons of heroic and eminent graces and operations, of vast and expensive charities, of prodigious abstinencies, of eremitical retirements, of ascetical diet, of perfect religion, and canonized persons; but to all men of good will, whose souls are hallowed with holy purposes and pious desires, though the beauties of the religion and holy thoughts were not spent in exterior acts, nor called out by the opportunities of a rich and expressive fortune.

5. But here we know where the seat and regiment of peace is placed, and all of it must pass by us and descend upon us as duty and reward. It proceeds from the Word incarnate, from the Son

of God undertaking to reconcile us to his Father and it is ministered and consigned unto us every event and act of providence, whether it deciphered in characters of paternal indulgence, of correction, or absolution. For that is not peace from above, to have all things according to human and natural wishes; but to be in favour with God, that is peace: always remembering, that to be chastised by him is not a certain testimony of his mere wrath, but to all his servants a charter of love and of paternal provision, since 'chastises every son whom he receives.' Whosoever seeks to avoid all this world's adversity, can never find peace: but he only who hath resolved all affections, and placed them in the heart of God, he who denies his own will, and hath killed self-love, and all those enemies within that make afflictions to become miseries indeed and full of bitterness, he only enjoys this peace; and in proportion to every man's mortification and self-denial so are the degrees of his peace. And this is the peace which the angel proclaimed at the annunciation of that birth, which taught humility and contempt of things below, and all their vain glories, by the greatest argument in the world even the poverty of God incarnate. And if God sent his own, natural, only-begotten and beloved Son, in all the dresses of poverty and contempt, that person is vain who thinks God will love him better than he loved his own Son, or that he can express his love any other or gentler way than make him partaker of the fortune of his eldest Son. There is one other postern to the dwelling of peace, and that is, 'Good will to men;' for as much charity as we have to others, such a meas-

of peace also we may enjoy at home: for peace was proclaimed only to 'men of good will,' to them that are at peace with God and all the world.

6. But the angel brought the message to shepherds, to persons simple and mean and humble, persons likely to be more apprehensive of the mystery, and less of the scandal of the poverty of the Messiah. For they whose custom or affections dwell in secular pomps, who are not used by charity or humility to stoop to an evenness and consideration of their brethren, of equal natures though of unequal fortunes, are persons of all the world most indisposed and removed from the understanding of spiritual excellencies, especially when they do not come clothed with advantages of the world, and of such beauties which they admire. God himself in poverty comes in a prejudice to them that love riches; and simplicity is folly to crafty persons,¹ a mean birth is an ignoble stain, beggary is a scandal, and the cross an unanswerable objection. But the angel's moral in the circumstance of his address, and inviting the poor shepherds to Bethlehem, is, that none are fit to come to Christ but those who are poor in spirit, despisers of the world, simple in their hearts, without craft and secular designs: and therefore neither did the angel tell the story to Herod, nor to the Scribes and Pharisees, whose ambition had ends contradictory to the simplicity and poverty of the birth of Jesus.

7. These shepherds, when they conversed with angels, were 'watching over their flocks by night;'

¹ Horat. Serm. l. i. Sat. 3.

no revellers, but in a painful and dangerous employment, the work of an honest calling, securing their folds against incursions of wild beasts, which in those countries are not seldom or infrequent. And Christ, being the great Shepherd, (and possibly for the analogy's sake the sooner manifested to shepherds,) hath made his ministers overseers of their flocks, distinguished in their particular folds, and conveys the mysteriousness of his kingdom first to the pastors, and by their ministry to the flocks. But, although all of them be admitted to the ministry, yet those only to the interior recesses and nearer imitations of Jesus, who are watchful over their flocks, assiduous in their labours, painful in their sufferings, present in the dangers of the sheep, ready to interpose their persons and sacrifice their lives: these are shepherds who first converse with angels, and finally shall enter into the presence of the Lord. But besides this symbol, we are taught in the significations of the letter, that he that is diligent in the business of an honest calling, is then doing service to God, and a work so pleasing to him who hath appointed the sons of men to labour, that to these shepherds he made a return and recompence by the conversation of an angel; and hath advanced the reputation of an honest and a mean employment to such a testimony of acceptance, that no honest person, though busied in meaner offices, may ever hereafter in the estimation of Christ's disciples become contemptible.

8. The signs which the angel gave to discover the babe were no marks of lustre and vanity; but they should find, 1, a babe, 2, swaddled, 3, lying in a manger: the first, a testimony of his humility, the second, of his poverty, third, of his incommodity

and uneasiness: for Christ came to combat the whole body of sin, and to destroy every province of Satan's kingdom; for these are direct antinomies, 'the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.' Against the first Christ opposed his hard and uneasy lodging; against the second, the poorness of his swaddling bands and mantle; and the third is combated by the great dignation and descent of Christ from a throne of majesty to the state of a sucking babe. And these are the first lessons he hath taught us for our imitation; which that we may the better do, as we must take him for our pattern, so also for our helper, and pray to the holy Child, and he will not only teach us, but also give us power and ability.

THE PRAYER.

O blessed and eternal Jesu, at whose birth the choirs of angels sang praises to God, and proclaimed peace to men, sanctify my will and inferior affections; make me to be within the conditions of peace, that I be holy and mortified, a despiser of the world, and exterior vanities, humble and charitable; that by thy eminent example I may be so fixed in the designs and prosecution of the ends of God and a blissful eternity, that I may be unmoved with the terrors of the world, unaltered with its allurements and seductions, not ambitious of its honour, nor desirous of its fulness and plenty: but make me diligent in the employment thou givest me, faithful in discharge of my trust, molested in my desires, content in the issues of thy providence: that in such dispositions I may receive and entertain visitations from heaven, and revelations of the mysteries and blisses evangelical; that by such directions I may be brought into thy presence, there to see thy beauties and admire thy graces, and imitate all thy imitable excellencies, and rest in thee for ever in this world by the perseverance of a holy and comfortable life, and in the

world to come in the participation of thy essential glories and felicities, O blessed and eternal Jesu.

Considerations upon the Epiphany of the blessed Jesus by a Star, and the Adoration of Jesus by the Eastern Magi.

1. GOD, who is the universal Father of all men, at the nativity of the Messias gave notice of it to all the world, as they were represented by the grand division of Jews and Gentiles; to the Jewish shepherds by an angel, to the eastern magi by a star. For the gospel is of universal dissemination, not confined within the limits of a national prerogative, but catholic and diffused. As God's love was, so was the dispensation of it, without respect of persons: for all being included under the curse of sin, were to him equal and indifferent, undistinguishable objects of mercy. And Jesus, descended of the Jews, was also the expectation of the Gentiles, and therefore communicated to all: 'the grace of God' being like the air we breathe, and 'it hath appeared to all men,'¹ saith St. Paul; but the conveyances and communications of it were different in the degrees of clarity and illustration. The angel told the shepherds the story of the nativity plainly and literally: the star invited the wise men by its rareness and supernatural apparition; to which also, as by a footpath, they had been led by the prophecy of Balaam.

2. But here first the grace of God prevents us;

¹ Tit. ii. 11.

without him we can do nothing: he lays the first stone in every spiritual building, and then expects by that strength he first gave us that we make the superstructures. But as a stone thrown into a river first moves the water, and disturbs its surface into a circle, and then its own force wafts the neighbouring drops into a larger figure by its proper weight; so is the grace of God the first principle of our spiritual motion, and when it moves us into its own figure, and hath actuated and ennobled our natural powers by the influence of that first incentive, we continue the motion, and enlarge the progress. But as the circle on the face of the waters grows weaker till it hath smoothed itself into a natural and even current, unless the force be renewed or continued; so does all our natural endeavour, when first set on work by God's preventing grace, decline to the imperfection of its own kind, unless the same force be made energetical and operative by the continuation and renewing of the same supernatural influence.

3. And therefore the eastern magi, being first raised up into wonder and curiosity by the apparition of the star, were very far from finding Jesus by such general and indefinite significations: but then the goodness of God's grace increased its own influence; for an inspiration from the Spirit of God admonished them to observe the star, showed the star that they might find it, taught them to acknowledge it,¹ instructed them to understand its purpose, and invited them to follow it, and never left them till they had found the holy Jesus. Thus also God deals with us, he

¹ Dedit intellectum, qui præstitit it signum. S. Leo, Ser. 1. de Epiph.—“He who gave the sign gave the understanding also.”

gives us the first grace, and adds the second ; he enlightens our understandings, and actuates our faculties, and sweetly allures us by the proposition of rewards, and wounds us with the arrows of his love, and inflames us with fire from heaven ; ever giving us new assistances, or increasing the old, refreshing us with comforts, or arming us with patience ; sometimes stirring our affections by the lights held out to our understanding, sometimes bringing confirmation to our understanding by the motion of our affections ; till by variety of means we at last arrive at Bethlehem, in the service and entertainments of the holy Jesus. Which we shall certainly do if we follow the invitations of grace, and exterior assistances, which are given us to instruct us, to help us, and to invite us, but not to force our endeavours and co-operations.

4. As it was an unsearchable wisdom, so it was an unmeasurable grace of Providence and dispensation which God did exhibit to those wise men, to them, as to all men, disposing the ministeries of his grace sweetly, and by proportion to the capacities of the person suscipient. For God called the Gentiles by such means as their customs and learning had made prompt and easy. For these magi were great philosophers and astronomers ; and therefore God sent a miraculous star to invite and lead them to a new and more glorious light, the lights of grace and glory. And God so blessed them in following the star, to which their innocent curiosity and national customs were apt to lead them, that their custom was changed to grace, and their learning heightened with inspiration, and God crowned all with a spiritual and glorious event. It was not much unlike, which God did to

the princes and diviners among the Philistines, who sent the ark back with five golden emrods and five golden mice; an act proportionable to the custom and sense of their nation and religion: yet God accepted their opinion and divination to the utmost end they designed it, and took the plagues of emrods and mice from them. For oftentimes the custom or the philosophy of the opinions of a nation are made instrumental, through God's acceptance, to ends higher than they can produce by their own energy and intendment. And thus the astrological divinations of the Magi were turned into the order of a greater design than the whole art could promise, their employment being altered into grace, and nature into a miracle. But then, when the wise men were brought by this means, and had seen Jesus, then God takes ways more immediate and proportionable to the kingdom of grace: the next time God speaks to them by an angel. For so is God's usual manner to bring us to him; first, by ways agreeable to us, and then to increase, by ways agreeable to himself. And when he hath furnished us with new capacities, he gives new lights in order to more perfect employments; and, 'to him that hath shall be given full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over;' the eternal kindness of God being like the sea, which delights to run in its old channel, and to fill the hollownesses of the earth which itself hath made, and hath once watered.

5. This star, which conducted the wise men to Bethlehem, (if at least it was properly a star, and not an angel,) was set in its place to be seen by all; but was not observed, or not understood, nor its message obeyed, by any but the three wise men.

And indeed, no man hath cause to complain of God, as if ever he would be deficient in assistance necessary to his service; but, first the grace God separates us from the common condition of incapacity and indisposition, and then we separate ourselves one from another by the use or neglect of this grace; and God doing his part to us, we have no cause to complain of us, who neglect that which is our portion of the work. And however even the promises and the kindnesses of God's predestination and antecedent mercy do very much towards making grace to be effective of its purpose; yet the manner of all those influences and operations being moral, persuasive, reasonable, and divisible by the concurrence of various circumstances, the causes and the effects are brought nearer and nearer in various degrees to the susceptible; but not brought so close together, that God expects us to do something towards the accomplishment of his purpose. So that we may say with St. Paul, 'It is not I that have obtained this grace of God that is with me.' And at the same time, when by reason of our co-operation we are enabled to actuate and improve God's grace, and become distinguished from other persons more negligent upon the same opportunities, God is he who also distinguishes us by the proportions and circumstances of his applications of his grace to every singularity; that we may be careful not to neglect the grace, and yet to return the entire glory to God.

6. Although God, to second the generous desire of these wise personages in their inquiry after the new prince, made the star to guide them through the difficulties of their journey; yet, when they came to Jerusalem, the star disappeared: God resolving to try their faith, and the activity of their desires; to demonstrate to them that God is

of all his creatures, and a voluntary dispenser of his own favours, and can as well take them as indulge them ; and to engage them upon use of ordinary means and ministeries when are to be had : for now the extraordinary and glorious guide for a time did cease, that they at Jerusalem might inquire of them whose and profession of sacred mysteries did oblige to publish the Messias. For God is so great lover of order, so regular and certain an exactor as to use those ordinary ministeries of his own appointing, that he, having used the extraordinary as architects do frames of wood, to support the houses till they be built, takes them away when the house is ready, and leaves us to those other of his appointment, and hath given such efficacy to these, that they are as persuasive and operative as a word ; and St. Paul's sermon would convert as many, as if Moses should rise from the grave. And the doctrines of Christianity have not only the same truth, but the same evidence and virtue also as had in the midst of those prime demonstrations extraordinary by miracle and prophecy, if they were equally disposed.

When they were come to the doctors of the law, they asked confidently, and with great openness, under the ear and eye of a tyrant prince, proud and timorous, jealous and ambitious, ' Where is that is born King of the Jews ?' and so gave evidence of their faith, of their magnanimity, and of their confidence and profession of it, and of their knowledge of the mystery and object, in pursuance of which they had taken so troublesome and vexatious journeys. And besides, that they upbraided the stupidity and infidel baseness of the Jewish nation,

who stood unmoved and unconcerned by all the circumstances of wonder, and stirred not one to make inquiry after or to visit the new-born King ; they also teach us to be open and confident in our religion and faith, and to consider our temporal, when they once come to contest against our religious interests.

8. The doctors of the Jews told the wise men where Christ was to be born ; the magi they address themselves with haste to see him and to worship, and the doctors themselves stir not : God is only serving himself with truth out of the mouth of impious persons, but magnifying the recesses of his counsel and wisdom and predestination, and uses the same doctrine to glorify himself, and confound his enemies, to save the scholars, and condemn the tutors, to instruct one, and upbraid the other ; making it an instrument of faith, and conviction of infidelity ; the sermons of the doctors in such cases being like the spoils of beavers, sheeps, and silk-worms, designed to clothe others, and made the occasions of their own nakedness, and the causes of their death. But as it is a demonstration of the divine wisdom, so it is of human folly ; there being no greater imprudence in the world, than to do others advantage, and to neglect our own. If thou doest well unto thyself, men will speak good of thee :¹ but if thou beest like a channel in a garden, through which the water runs to cool and moisten the herbs, but nothing for own use ; thou buildest a fortune to them up at the ruins of thine own house, while, ‘after t

¹ *Piaga mortale che si non puo guarire, Vivere in altrui, et se stesso morire.*

preaching to others, thou thyself dost become a cast away.'

9. When the wise men departed from Jerusalem, the star again appeared, and they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And indeed to new converts, and persons in their first addresses to the worship of God, such spiritual and exterior comforts are often indulged; because, when God judges them to be most necessary, as being invitations to duty by the entertainments of our affections with such sweetnesss, which represent the glory of the reward by the antepasts and refreshments dispensed even in the ruggedness of the way, and incommodities of the journey. All other delights are the pleasures of beasts or the sports of children; these are the antepasts and preventions of the full feasts and overflowings of eternity.

10. When they came to Bethlehem, and the star pointed them to a stable, they entered in; and being enlightened with a divine ray proceeding from the face of the holy child, and seeing through the cloud, and passing through the scandal of his mean lodging and poor condition, they bowed themselves to the earth; first giving themselves an oblation to this great King, then they made offering of their gifts: for a man's person is first accepted, then his gift; God first regarded Abel, and then accepted his offering. Which we are best taught to understand by the present instance: for it means no more, but that all our outward services and oblations are made acceptable by the prior presentation of an inward sacrifice. If we have first presented ourselves, then our gift is pleasant, as coming but to express the truth of the first sacrifice: but if our person be not first

made an holocaust to God, the lesser oblations of outward presents are like sacrifices without salt and fire, nothing to make them pleasant or religious. For all other senses of this proposition charge upon God the distinguishing and acceptation of persons, against which he solemnly protests. God regards no man's person, but according to the doing of his duty: but then God is said first to accept the person, and then the gift, when the person is first sanctified and given to God by the vows and habits of a holy life, and then all the actions of his religion are homogeneal to their principle, and accepted by the acceptation of the man.

11. These magi presented to the holy babe gold, frankincense, and myrrh, protesting their faith of three articles by the symbolical oblation: by gold, that he was a king; by incense, that he was God; by myrrh, that he was a man. And the presents also were representative of interior virtues: the myrrh signifying faith, mortification, chastity, compunction, and all the actions of the purgative way of spiritual life; the incense signifying hope, prayer, obedience, good intention, and all the actions and devotions of the illuminative; the giving the gold representing love to God and our neighbours, the contempt of riches, poverty of spirit, and all the eminencies and spiritual riches of the unitive life. And these oblations, if we present to the holy Jesus, both our persons and our gifts shall be accepted, our sins shall be purged, our understandings enlightened, and our wills united to this holy child, and entitled to a communion of all his glories.

12. And thus in one view and two instances God hath drawn all the world to himself by his Son

Jesus, in the instance of the shepherds and the Arabian magi, Jews and Gentiles, learned and unlearned, rich and poor, noble and ignoble; that in him all nations, and all conditions, and all families, and all persons might be blessed; having called all by one star or other, by natural reason or by the secrets of philosophy, by the revelations of the Gospel, or by the ministry of angels, by the illuminations of the Spirit, or by the sermons and dictates of spiritual fathers: and hath consigned this lesson to us, that we must never 'appear before the Lord empty,' offering gifts to him by the expenses or by the affections of charity, either the worshipping or the oblations of religion, either the riches of the world or the love of the soul. For if we cannot bring gold with the rich Arabians, we may, with the poor shepherds, come and 'kiss the Son, lest he be angry;' and in all cases come and serve him with fear and reverence,' and spiritual rejoicings.

THE PRAYER.

Most holy Jesu, thou art the glory of thy people Israel, and light to the Gentiles, and wert pleased to call the Gentiles to the adoration and knowledge of thy sacred person and laws, communicating the inestimable riches of thy holy discipline to all, with an universal undistinguishing love. Give unto us spirits docible, pious, prudent, and ductile, that no motion or invitation of grace be ineffectual, but may produce excellent effects upon us, and the secret whispers of thy Spirit may prevail upon our affections in order to piety and obedience, as certainly as the loudest and most clamorous sermons of the gospel. Create in us such excellencies as are fit to be presented to thy glorious majesty: accept of the oblation of myself, and my entire services. But be thou pleased to verify my offering, and se-

cure the possession to thyself, that the enemy may not pollute : sacrifice, or divide the gift, or question the title ; but that I may be wholly thine, and for ever, clarify my understanding, sanctify my will, replenish my memory with arguments of piety ; then shall I present to thee an oblation rich and precious as the treasured gift of the Levantine princes. Lord, I am thine, reject me not from thy favour, exclude me not from thy presence : then shall I serve thee all the days of my life, and partake of the glory of thy kingdom, in which thou reignest gloriously and eternal
Amen.

SECTION V.

Of the Circumcision of Jesus, and his Presentation in the Temple.

1. AND now the blessed Saviour of the world began to do the work of his mission and our redemption: and because man had prevaricated all the Divine commandments, to which all human nature respectively to the persons of several capacities was obliged, and therefore the whole nature was obnoxious to the just rewards of its demerits; first, Christ was to put that nature he had assumed into a saveable condition, by fulfilling his Father's preceptive will; and then to reconcile it actually, by suffering the just deservings of its prevarications. He therefore addresses himself to all the parts of an active obedience; 'and when eight days were accomplished for the circumcision of the child, he exposed his tender body to the sharpness of the circumcising stone, and shed his blood in drops, giving an earnest of those rivers which he did afterwards pour out for the cleansing all human nature, and extinguishing the wrath of God.

2. He that had no sin, nor was conceived by natural generation, could have no adherences to his soul or body which needed to be pared away by a rite, and cleansed by a mystery. Neither indeed do we find it expressed, that circumcision was ordained for abolition or pardon of original sin,¹ (it is indeed presumed so,) but it was instituted to be

¹ Euseb. lib. ix. c. 22. Præpar. Evangel.

a seal of a covenant between God and Abraham, and Abraham's posterity, 'a seal of the righteousness of faith; and therefore was not improper for him to suffer who was the child of Abraham, and who was the Prince of the covenant, and 'the author and finisher of that faith,' which was consigned to Abraham in circumcision. But so mysterious were all the actions of Jesus, that this one served many ends:—for 1, It gave demonstration of the verity of human nature; 2, So he began to fulfil the law; 3, And took from himself the scandal of uncircumcision, which would eternally have prejudiced the Jews against his entertainment and communion: 4, And then he took upon him that name which declared him to be the Saviour of the world; which as it was consummate in the blood of the cross, so was it inaugurated in the blood of circumcision. For 'when the eight days were accomplished for circumcising the child, his name was called Jesus.'

3. But this holy family, who had laid up their joys in the eyes and heart of God, longed till they might be permitted an address to the temple, that there they might present the holy babe unto his Father; and indeed that he, who had no other, might be brought to his own house. For although, while he was a child he did differ nothing from a servant, yet he was the Lord of the place: it was his 'Father's house,' and he was 'the Lord of all.' And therefore, 'when the days of the purification were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord,' to whom he was holy, as being the first born; 'the first born of his mother, the only begotten Son of his Father, and the first born of every creature.' And they 'did with him accord-

the law of Moses, offering a pair of turtle-
for his redemption.

But there was no public act about this holy
but it was attended by something miraculous
extraordinary. And at this instant the Spirit
directed a holy person into the temple, that
might feel the fulfilling of a prophecy made to
himself, that he might 'before his death behold the
'Christ,' and embrace 'the glory and conso-
lation of Israel and the light of the Gentiles,' in his

For old 'Simeon came by the Spirit into
the temple, and when the parents brought in the
Jesus, then took he him up in his arms, and
said God, and prophesied, and spake glorious
things of that child, and sad things and glorious
warning his mother: that the 'child was set for
the rising and falling of many in Israel, for a sign
that should be spoken against;' and the bitterness
of that contradiction should 'pierce the heart' of the
virgin-mother like a sword, that her joy at the
birth of her child might be attempered with present
intimation of her future trouble, and the excellent
reward of being the mother of God might be
balanced with the reward of martyrdom, and a mo-
tion of love be raised up to an excellency great
enough to make her suffer the bitterness of being
mixed with his love and sorrow as with a
lance.

But old Anna the prophetess came also in,
after many years and joy, and found the reward of her
prayers and fasting in the temple: the long-
looked-for redemption of Israel was now in the tem-
ple, and she saw with her eyes the light of the world,
the heir of heaven, the long-looked-for Messiah,
whom the nations had desired and expected till

their hearts were faint, and their eyes dim with looking further, and apprehending greater distances. She also prophesied, and 'gave thanks unto the Lord.' But 'Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.'

AD. SECTION V.

Considerations upon the Circumcision of the Holy Child Jesus.

1. 'WHEN eight days were come,' the holy Jesus was circumcised, and shed the first-fruits of his blood, offering them to God like the prelibation of a sacrifice, and earnest of the great seas of effusion designed for his passion: not for the expiation of any stain himself hath contracted, for he was spotless as the face of the sun, and had contracted no wrinkle from the aged and polluted brow of Adam; but it was an act of obedience, and yet of choice and voluntary susception, to which no obligation had passed upon him in the condition of his own person. For as he was included in the verge of Abraham's posterity, and had put on the common outside of his nation, his parents had intimation enough to pass upon him the sacrament of the national covenant, and it became an act of excellent obedience: but because he was a person extraordinary, and exempt from the reasons of circumcision, and himself in person was to give period to the rite, therefore it was an act of choice in him; and in both the capacities becomes a precedent of duty to us, in the first of obedience, in the second of humility.

2. But it is considerable, that the holy Jesus, who might have pleaded his exemption, especially in a matter of pain and dishonour, yet chose that way which was more severe and regular ; so teaching us to be strict in our duties, and sparing in the rights of privilege and dispensation. We pretend every indisposition of body to excuse us from penal duties, from fasting, from going to church ; and instantly we satisfy ourselves with saying, 'God will have mercy, and not sacrifice : ' so making ourselves judges of our own privileges, in which commonly we are parties against God, and therefore likely to pass unequal sentence. It is not an easy argument that will bring us to the severities and rigours of duty, but we snatch at occasions of dispensation ; and therefore possibly may mistake the justice of the opportunities by the importunities of our desires. However, if this too much easiness be in any case excusable from sin, yet in all cases it is an argument of infirmity ; and the regular observation of the commandment is the surer way to perfection. For not every inconvenience of body is fit to be pleaded against the inconvenience of losing spiritual advantages, but only such which upon prudent account does intrench upon the laws of charity ; or such whose consequent is likely to be impediment of a duty in a greater degree of loss than the present omission. For the spirit being in many perfections more eminent than the body, all spiritual improvements have the same proportions : so that if we were just estimators of things, it ought not to be less than a great incommodity to the body which we mean to prevent by the loss of a spiritual benefit, or the omission of a duty. He were very improvident, who would

lose a finger for the good husbandry of saving a ducat; and it would be an unhandsome excuse from the duties of repentance to pretend care of the body. The proportions and degrees of this are so nice and of so difficult determination, that men are more apt to untie the girdle of discipline with the loose hands of dispensation and excuse, than to strain her too hard by the strictures and bindings of severity: but the error were the surer on this side.

3. The blessed Jesus refused not the signature of this bloody covenant, though it were the character of a sinner, and did sacramentally rescind the impure relics of Adam, and the contractions of evil customs: which was the greatest descent of humility that is imaginable, that he should put himself to pain to be reckoned amongst sinners, and to have their sacraments and their protestations, though his innocence was purer than the flames of cherubim. But we use arts to seem more righteous than we are, desiring rather to be accounted holy than to be so; as thinking the vanity of reputation more useful to us than the happiness of a remote and far-distant eternity. But if (as it is said) circumcision was ordained, besides the signing of the covenant, to abolish the guilt of original sin, we are willing to confess that; it being no act of humiliation to confess a crime that all the world is equally guilty of, that could not be avoided by our timeliest industry, and that serves us for so many ends in the excuse and mitigation of our actual impieties: in that as Diogenes trampled upon Plato's pride with a greater fastidiousness and humourous ostentation; so we do with original sin, declaim against it bitterly, to save the

harmless, and are free in the publication of that we may be instructed how to conceal the law. The blessed Jesus had in him no principle of sin, original nor actual, and therefore this nation of his, in submitting himself to the new covenant of circumcision, which was an express, and sacramental abscission of it, was a mark of glorious humility: yet our charging of ourselves so promptly with Adam's fault, whatever it may have in the strictness of theology, (*forsitan*) but an ill end in morality; and so consider it, without any reflection upon the question.

For though the fall of Adam lost to him all supernatural assistances which God put into nature by way of grace; yet it is by accident we are more prone to many sins than we are true. Adam's sin did discompose his understanding and affections; and every sin we do does make us more unreasonable, more violent, more sensual, more apt still to the multiplication of the same or the like actions. The first rebellion of the inferior faculties against the will and reason, and every victory the flesh gets over the spirit, makes the inferior insolent, strong, obstinate, domineering and triumphant upon proportionable ruins of the spirit, blinding reason, and binding our will: and all these disorders of our powers are increased by the pernicious ill customs, and false principles, and ridiculous maxims of the world: which makes the latter to be worse than the former,¹ unless some other

¹ Porphyr, lib. iv. de Non esu animalium.

inclined to love them than to disrepute them, and if we disobey them, it is when any injury of theirs comes cross to our natural desires and purposes. But if from our infancy we be taught concerning a stranger that he is our father, we frame our affections to nature, and our nature to custom and education, and are as apt to love him who is not, and yet is said to be, as him who is said not to be, and yet indeed is our natural father.

7. And in sensual things, if God had commanded polygamy or promiscuous concubinage, or unlimited eatings and drinkings, it is not supposed but that we should have been strong enough to have obeyed God in all such inclinations; and the sons of Israel never murmured when God bade them borrow jewels and ear-rings, and spoil the Egyptians. But because God restrained these desires, our duties are the bonds because they are fetters to our liberty, and contradictions to those natural inclinations, which are made more active by evil custom and unwholesome educations. From which premises we observe, in order to practice, that sin creeps upon us in our education so tacitly and undiscernibly that we mistake the cause of it; and yet so plentifully and effectually, that we judge it to be of very nature, and charge it upon Adam, to lay the imputation upon us, or to increase the liberty or the confidence; when every one of us is a son of Adam, the man of sin, and the parent of our own impurities. For it is notorious, that our iniquities do so discompose our naturals, and our customs and examples do so encourage impiety.

¹ Quintil. lib i. c. 2.

the law of God enjoins such virtues which do
 nce to nature, that our proclivity to sin is oc-
 ned by the accident, and is caused by our-
 s; whatever mischief Adam did to us, we do
 to ourselves. We are taught to be revengeful
 in our cradles, and are taught to strike our neigh-
 as a means to still our frowardness, and to
 by our wranglings. Our nurses teach us to
 the greatness of our birth, or the riches of
 inheritance, or they learn us to be proud, or to
 impatient, before they learn us to know God, or
 by our prayers. And then, because the use of
 on comes at no definite time, but insensibly
 divisibly, we are permitted such acts with im-
 ty too long, deferring to repute them to be
 till the habit is grown strong, natural, and
 culine: and because from the infancy it began
 inclinations, and tender overtures and slighter
 ons, Adam is laid in the fault, and original
 did all. And this clearly we therefore confess,
 our faults may seem the less, and the misery
 pretended natural, that it may be thought to be
 mediable, and therefore we not engaged to en-
 our a cure. So that the confession of our ori-
 l sin is no imitation of Christ's humility in
 ring circumcision, but too often an act of pride,
 lessness, ignorance, and security.

At the circumcision his parents imposed the
 name told to the virgin by the angel: 'His
 e was called Jesus; a name above every name.'
 in old times God was known by names of
 er, of nature, of majesty; but his name of
 y was reserved till now, when God did pur-
 to pour out the whole treasure of his mercy
 the mediation and ministry of his holy Son.

And because God gave to the holy babe the name in which the treasures of mercy were deposited, and exalted 'this name above all names;' we are taught that the purpose of his counsel was, to exalt and magnify his mercy above all his other works, he being delighted with this excellent demonstration of it, in the mission, and manifestation, and crucifixion of his Son: he hath changed the ineffable name into a name unutterable by man, and desirable by all the world; the majesty is all arrayed in robes of mercy, the tetragrammaton or adorable mystery of the patriarchs is made fit for pronunciation and expression, when it becometh the name of the Lord's Christ. And if Jehovah be full of majesty and terror, the name of Jesus is full of sweetness and mercy. It is God clothed with circumstances of facility, and opportunities of approximation. The great and highest name of God could not be pronounced truly, till it came to be finished with a guttural that made up the name given by this angel to the holy child; nor God received or entertained by men, till he was made human and sensible by the adoption of a sensitive nature; like vowels pronouncible by the intertexture of a consonant. Thus was his person made tangible, and his name utterable, and his mercy brought home to our necessities, and the mystery made explicate, at the circumcision of this holy babe.

9. But now God's mercy was at full sea, now was the time when God made no reserves to the effusion of his mercy. For to the patriarchs and persons of eminent sanctity and employment in the elder ages of the world, God, according to the degrees of his manifestation or present purpose,

would give them one letter of this ineffable name. For the reward that Abraham had in the change of his name, was, that he had the honour done him to have one of the letters of Jehovah put into it; and so had Joshua, when he was a type of Christ, and the prince of the Israelitish armies. And when God took away one of these letters, it was a curse.¹ But now he communicated all the whole name to this holy child, and put a letter more to it, to signify that he was the glory of God, 'the express image of his Father's person,' God eternal, and then manifested to the world in his humanity; that all the intelligent world, who expected beatitude, and had treasured all their hopes in the ineffable name of God, might find them all with ample returns in this name of Jesus, which God hath exalted above every name, even above that by which God in the Old Testament did represent the greatest awfulness of his majesty. This miraculous name is above all the powers of magical enchantments, the nightly rites of sorcerers, the secrets of Memphis, the drugs of Thessaly, the silent and mysterious murmurs of the wise Chaldees, and the spells of Zoroastres: this is the name at which the devils did tremble, and pay their enforced and involuntary adorations, by confessing the divinity, and quitting their possessions and usurped habitations. If our prayers be made in this name, God opens the windows of heaven, and rains down benediction. At the mention of this name the blessed apostles, and Hermione the daughter of St. Philip, and Philotheus the son of Theophila, and St. Hilarion, and St. Paul the

¹ Isa. xxi. 11, in casu Idumææ; Duma vocatur, dempto H.

eremite, and innumerable other lights who followed hard after the Sun of righteousness, wrought great and prodigious miracles: 'Signs and wonders and healings were done by the name of the holy child Jesus.' This is the name which we should engrave in our hearts, and write upon our foreheads, and pronounce with our most harmonious accents, and rest our faith upon, and place our hopes in, and love with the overflowings of charity, and joy, and adoration. And as the revelation of this name satisfied the hopes of all the world, so it must determine our worshippings, and the addresses of our exterior and interior religion: it being that name whereby God and God's mercies are made presential to us, and proportionate objects of our religion and affections.

THE PRAYER.

Most holy and ever blessed Jesu, who art infinite in essence, glorious in mercy, mysterious in thy communications, affable and presential in the descents of thy humanity, I adore thy glorious name, whereby thou hast shut up the abysses, and opened the gates of heaven, restraining the power of hell, and discovering and communicating the treasures of the Father's mercies. O Jesu, be thou a Jesus unto me, and save me from the precipices and ruins of sin, from the expresses of thy Father's wrath, from the miseries and insufferable torments of accursed spirits, by the power of thy majesty, by the sweetnesses of thy mercy, and sacred influences and miraculous glories of thy name. I adore and worship thee in thy excellent obedience and humility, who hast submitted thy innocent and spotless flesh to the bloody covenant of circumcision. Teach me to practise so blessed and holy a precedent, that I may be humble and obedient to thy sacred laws, severe and regular in my religion, mortified in my body and spirit, of circumcised heart and tongue: that

what thou didst represent in symbol and mystery, I may really express in the exhibition of an exemplary, pious, and mortified life, cutting off all excrescencies of my spirit, and whatsoever may minister to the flesh, or any of its ungodly desires : that now thy holy name is called upon me, I may do no dishonour to the name, nor scandal to the institution, but may do the honour and worship and adorations of a pure religion, O most holy and ever blessed Jesu.

DISCOURSE II.

Of the Virtue of Obedience.

1. THERE are certain excellencies either of habit or consideration, which spiritual persons use to call general ways, being a dispersed influence into all the parts of good life, either directing the single actions to the right end, or managing them with right instruments, and adding special excellencies and formalities to them, or morally inviting to the repetition of them ; but they are like the general medicaments in physic, or the prime instruments in mathematical disciplines : such as are the consideration of the divine presence, the example of Jesus, right intention. And such also is the virtue of obedience, which perfectly unites our actions to God, and conforms us to the divine will ; which is the original of goodness, and sanctifies and makes a man an holocaust to God ; which contains in it eminently all other graces, but especially those graces whose essence consists in a conformity of a part or the whole ; (such are faith, humility patience, and charity ;) which gives quietness and tranquillity to the spirit, and is an antepast of paradise ; (where their jubilee is the

perpetual joys of obedience, and their doing is the enjoying the divine pleasure;) which adds an excellency and lustre to pious actions, and hallows them which are indifferent, and lifts up some actions from their unhallowed nature to circumstances of good and of acceptance. If a man says his prayers or communicates out of custom, or without intuition of the precept and divine commandment; the act is like a ship returning from her voyage without her venture and her burden, as unprofitable as without stowage. But, if God commands us either to eat or to abstain, to sleep or to be waking, to work or to keep a sabbath; these actions, which are naturally neither good nor evil, are sanctified by the obedience, and ranked amongst actions of the greatest excellency. And this also was it which made Abraham's offer to kill his son, and the Israelites spoiling the Egyptians, to become acts laudable, and not unjust; they were acts of obedience, and therefore had the same formality and essence with actions of the most spiritual devotions. God's command is all our rule for practice, and our obedience united to the obedience of Jesus is all our title to acceptance.

2. But, by obedience, I do not here mean the exterior execution of the work, for so obedience is no grace distinct from the acting any or all the commandments; but besides the doing of the thing, (for that also must be presupposed,) it is a sacrifice of our proper will to God, a choosing the duty because God commands it. For beasts also carry burdens and do our commands by compulsion; and the fear of slaves and the rigour of taskmasters made the number of bricks to be completed, when Israel groaned and cried to God for

. But sons that labour under the sweet pater-regiment of their fathers, and the influence of , they love the precept, and do the imposition the same purposes and compliant affections which the fathers made it. When Christ commanded us to renounce the world, there were : that did think it a hard saying, and do so and the young rich man forsook him upon it. Ananias and Sapphira, upon whom some nces were done by custom, or the excellent ons of the apostles, sold their possessions too ; it was so against their will, that they retained of it. But St. Paul did not only forsake all secular fortunes, but ‘ counted all to be dross he might gain Christ ;’ he gave his will, made fertility of that, as well as of his goods, choosing act which was enjoined. This was the obedience the holy Jesus paid to his heavenly Father, voluntary, that it was ‘ meat to him to do his er’s will.’¹

And this was intended always by God ; (‘ My give me thy heart ;’) and particularly by the Jesus : for in the saddest instance of all his epts, even that of suffering persecution, we are manded to ‘ rejoice, and to be exceeding glad.’

so did those holy martyrs in the primitive ,² who upon just grounds, when God’s glory e edification of the church had interest in it, ed themselves to tyrants, and dared the vio : of the most cruel and bowelless hangmen. this is the best oblation we can present to . “ To offer gold is a present fit to be made by ug beginners in religion, not by men in Chris-

¹ John, iv. 34.

² S. Hieron. Epist. ad Licin. Hispan.

tianity ;”¹ yea, Crates the Theban threw his gold away, and so did Antisthenes; but to offer our will to God, to give ourselves, is the act of an apostle, the proper act of Christians. And therefore, when the apostles made challenge of a reward for leaving all their possessions, Christ makes no reply to the instance, nor says, ‘You who have left all,’ but ‘You who have followed me in the regeneration, shall sit upon twelve thrones, and judge the twelve tribes of Israel:’ meaning, that the quitting the goods was nothing; but the obedience to Christ, that they followed Jesus in the regeneration, going themselves in pursuit of him, and giving themselves to him, that was it which entitled them to a throne.

4. And this therefore God enjoins, that our offerings to him may be entire and complete, that we pay him a holocaust, that we do his work without murmuring, and that his burden may become easy, when it is borne up with the wings of love, and alacrity of spirit. For in effect, this obedience of the will is, in true speaking and strict theology, nothing else but that charity which gives excellency to alms, and energy to faith, and acceptance to all graces. But I shall reduce this to particular and more minute considerations.

5. First, We shall best know that our will is in the obedience by our prompt undertaking, by our cheerful managing, by our swift execution: for all degrees of delay are degrees of immorigerousness and unwillingness.² And since time is extrinsic to the act, and alike to every part of it, nothing determines an action but the opportunity without,

¹ S. Hieron. in Matt. xix. 28.

² S. Bernard. Serm de Obedient. Tacit. lib. vi. Annal.

and the desires and willingness within. And therefore, he who deliberates beyond his first opportunity, and exterior determination and appointment of the act, brings fire and wood, but wants a lamb for the sacrifice; and, unless he offer up his Isaac, his beloved will, he hath no ministry prepared for God's acceptance. He that does not repent to-day, puts it to the question whether he will repent at all or no. He that defers restitution when all the circumstances are fitted, is not yet resolved upon the duty: and when he does, if he does it against his will, he does but do honorary penance, with a paper upon his hat, and a taper in his hand; it may satisfy the law, but not satisfy his conscience; it neither pleases himself, and less pleases God. A sacrifice without a heart was a sad and ominous presage in the superstition of the Roman augurs; and so it is in the service of God; for what the exhibition of the work is to man, that the presentation of the will is to God. It is but a cold charity to a naked beggar to say, God help thee, and do nothing: give him clothes, and he feels your charity. But God, who is the searcher of the heart, his apprehension of actions relative of him is of the inward motions and addresses of the will; and without this, our exterior services are like the paying of a piece of money in which we have defaced the image,—it is not current.

6. Secondly, But besides the willingness to do the acts of express command, the readiness to do the intimations and tacit significations of God's pleasure, is the best testimony in the world that our will is in the obedience. Thus did the holy Jesus undertake a nature of infirmity, and suffer a death

of shame and sorrow, and became obedient from the circumcision even unto the death of the cross; not staying for a command, but because it was his Father's pleasure mankind should be redeemed. For, before the susception of it, he was not a person subicible to a command: it was enough that he understood the inclinations and designs of his Father's mercies. And therefore God hath furnished us with instances of uncommanded piety to be a touchstone of our obedience. He that does but his endeavour about the express commands, hath a bridle in his mouth, and is restrained by violence; but a willing spirit is like a greedy eye, devours all it sees, and hopes to make some proportionable returns and compensations of duty for his infirmity, by taking in the intimations of God's pleasure. When God commands chastity, he that undertakes a holy celibate hath great obedience to the command of chastity. God bids us give alms of our increase; he obeys this with great facility that sells all his goods, and gives them to the poor. And, provided our hastiness to snatch at too much does not make us let go our duty, like the indiscreet loads of too forward persons, too big, or too inconvenient and uncombined, there is not in the world a greater probation of our prompt obedience, than when we look further than the precise duty, swallowing that and more with our ready and hopeful purposes: nothing being so able to do miracles as love; and yet nothing being so certainly accepted as love, though it could do nothing in productions and exterior ministries.

7. Thirdly, but God requires that our obedience should have another excellency to make it a becoming present to the divine acceptance; our un-

derstanding must be sacrificed, and become an ingredient of our obedience. We must also believe, that whatsoever God commands is most fitting to be commanded, is most excellent in itself, and the best for us to do. The first gives our affections and desires to God ; and this also gives our reason, and is a perfection of obedience not communicable to the duties we owe to man. For God only is Lord of this faculty, and, being the fountain of all wisdom, therefore commands our understanding, because he alone can satisfy it. We are bound to obey human laws, but not bound to think the laws we live under are the most prudent constitutions in the world. But God's commandments are not only 'a lantern to our feet,' and 'a light unto our paths,' but a rule to our reason, and satisfaction to our understandings, as being the instruments of our address to God, and conveyances of his grace, and manuductions to eternity. And therefore St. John Climacus defines obedience to be, "an unexamined and unquestioned motion, a voluntary death and sepulture of the will, a life without curiosity, a laying aside our own discretion in the midst of the riches of the most excellent understandings."

8. And certainly there is not in the world a greater strength against temptations than is deposited in an obedient understanding, because that only can regularly produce the same affections, it admits of fewer degrees, and an infrequent alteration. But the actions proceeding from the appetite, as it is determined by any other principle than a satisfied understanding, have their heightenings and their declensions, and their changes and mutations, according to a thousand accidents.

Reason is more lasting than desire, and with fewer means to be tempted : but affections and motions of appetite, as they are procured by any thing, so may they expire by as great variety of causes. And therefore to serve God by way of understanding is surer, and in itself, unless it be by the accidental increase of degrees, greater, than to serve him upon the motion and principle of passions and desires ; though this be fuller of comfort and pleasure than the other. When Lot lived amongst the impure Sodomites, where his righteous soul was in a continual agony, he had few exterior incentives to a pious life, nothing to enkindle the sensible flame of burning desires towards piety ; but in the midst of all the discouragements of the world, nothing was left him but the way and precedency of a truly-informed reason and conscience. Just so is the way of those wise souls who live in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Where piety is out of countenance, where austerity is ridiculous, religion under persecution, no examples to lead us on, there the understanding is left to be the guide, and it does the work the surest ; for this makes the duty of many to be certain, regular, and chosen, constant, integral, and perpetual : but this way is like the life of an unmarried or a retired person, less of grief in it, and less of joy. But the way of serving God with the affections, and with the pleasures and entertainments of desires, is the way of the more passionate and imperfect, not in a man's power to choose or to procure ; but comes by a thousand chances, meeting with a soft nature, credulous or weak, easy or ignorant, softened with fears, or invited by forward desires.

9. Those that did live amidst the fervours of the primitive charity, and were warmed by their fires, grew inflamed by contact and vicinity to such burning and shining lights. And they therefore grew to high degrees of piety, because then every man made judgment of his own actions by the proportions which he saw before him, and believed all descents from those greater examples to be so many degrees from the rule. And he that lives in a college of devout persons will compare his own actions with the devotion and customs of that society, and not with the remissness of persons he hears of in story, but what he sees and lives with. But if we live in an age of indevotion, we think ourselves well assoiled if we be warmer than their ice; every thing which is above our example being eminent and conspicuous, though it be but like the light of a glow-worm, or the sparkling of a diamond, yet if it be in the midst of darkness, it is a goodly beauty. This I call the way of serving God by desires and affections. And this is altered by example, by public manners, by external works, by the assignment of offices, by designation of conventions for prayer, by periods and revolutions of times of duty, by hours and solemnities: so that a man shall owe his piety to these chances, which although they are graces of God and instruments of devotion, yet they are not always in our power; and therefore they are but accidental ministries of a good life, and the least constant or durable. But when the principle of our piety is a conformity of our understanding to God's laws, when we are instructed what to do, and therefore do it because we are satisfied it is most excellent

to obey God; this will support our piety against objections, lead it on in despite of disadvantages; this chooses God with reason, and is not determined from without: and as it is in some degree necessary for all times, so it is the greatest security against the change of laws and princes, and religions and ages. When all the incentives of affection and exterior determinations of our piety shall cease, and perhaps all external offices, and the daily sacrifice and piety itself shall fail from the face of the land; then the obedience founded in the understanding is the only lasting strength left us to make retreat to, and to secure our conditions. Thus from the composition of the will and affections with our exterior acts of obedience to God, our obedience is made willing, swift and cheerful; but from the composition of the understanding, our obedience becomes strong, sincere, and persevering: and this is that which St. Paul calls our reasonable service.

10. Fourthly, To which if we add, that our obedience be universal, we have all the qualifications which make the duty to be pious and prudent. The meaning is, that we obey God in all his sanctions, though the matter be in common account small and inconsiderable, and give no indulgence to ourselves to recede from the rule in any matter whatsoever. For the veriest minute of obedience is worth our attention, as being by God esteemed the trial of our obedience in a greater affair. 'He that is unjust in a little, will be unjust in a greater,' said our blessed Saviour. And since

to God all matter is alike, and no more accrues to him in a hecatomb than in a piece of gum, in an ascetic severity than in a secular life; God regards not the matter of a precept, but the obedience, which in all instances is the same: and he that will prevaricate when the matter is trifling, and by consequence the temptations to it weak and impotent, and soon confuted, will think he may better be excused when the temptations are violent and importunate, as it commonly happens in affairs of greater importance. He that will lie to save sixpence, will not stick at it when a thousand pounds is the purchase. And possibly there is more contempt and despite done to the divine authority, when we disobey it in such particulars wherein the obedience is most easy, and the temptations less troublesome. I do not say there is more injustice or more malice in a small disobedience than in a greater; but there is either more contempt, or more negligence and dissolution of discipline, than in the other.

11. And it is no small temptation of the devil, soliciting of us not to be curious of scruples and grains, not to disturb our peace for lighter disobediences; persuading us that something must be indulged to public manners, something to the civilities of society, something to nature, and to the approaches of our passions, and the motions of our first desires; but that we be not over-righteous. And true it is, that sometimes such surreptions and smaller indecencies are therefore pardoned and lessened almost to a nullity, because they dwell in the confines of things lawful and honest, and are not so notorious as to be separated from permissions by any public, certain, and uni-

versal cognizance, and therefore may pass upon a good man sometimes without observation. But it is a temptation, when we think of neglecting them by a predetermined incuriousness, upon pretence they are small. But this must be reduced to more regular conclusions.

12. First, Although smaller disobediences, expressed in slight misbecoming actions, when they come by surprise and sudden invasion, are through the mercies of God dashed in the very approach, their bills of accusation are thrown out, and they are not esteemed as competent instruments of separation from God's love: yet when a smaller sin comes by design, and is acted with knowledge and deliberation, (for then it is properly an act of disobedience,) *Malitia supplet defectum ætatis*, the malice of the agent heightens the smallness of the act, and makes up the iniquity. To drink liberally once, and something more freely than the strict rules of Christian sobriety and temperance permit, is pardoned the easier, when without deliberation and by surprise the person was abused, who intended not to transgress a minute, but by little and little was mistaken in his proportions: but if a man by design shall estimate his draughts, and his good-fellowship, and shall resolve upon a little intemperance, thinking because it is not very much, it is therefore none at all; that man hath mistaken himself into a crime. And although a little wound upon the finger is very curable, yet the smallest prick upon the heart is mortal; so is a design and purpose of the smallest disobedience in its formality as malicious and destructive, as in its matter it was pardonable and excusable.

13. Secondly, Although every lesser diobedi-

ice, when it comes singly, destroys not the love of God; (for although it may lessen the merit, yet it takes not away its natural being, nor interrupts its acceptation, lest all the world should all instants of time be in a damnable condition :) yet when these¹ smaller obliquities are repeated, and no repentance intervenes, this repetition combines and unites the lesser till they be contracted, and by their accumulation make a crime: and therefore a careless, reiterating, and an incurious walking in misbecoming actions is deadly and damnable in the return, though it was not so much at the setting forth. Every idle word is to be counted for, but we hope in much mercy: and he that gives himself over to immoderate talking,² will swell his account to a vast and mountainous proportion, and call all the lesser escapes to a stricter judgment. He that extends his recreation an hour beyond the limits of Christian moderation, and the analogy of its severity and employment, is accountable to God for that improvidence and waste of time: but he that shall mispend a day, and because that sin is not scandalous like adultery, or clamorous like oppression, unusual like bestiality, or crying for revenge

Quæ humanæ fragilitati, quamvis parva, tamen crebra succurrunt, si collecta contra nos fuerint, ita nos gravabunt et opprimunt, sicut unum aliquod grande peccatum. S. Aug. lib. 1. n. 50. Idem lib. de Pœnit.—“Those small but frequent vices which human frailty suffers, when collected into a mass, oppress and oppress us like some one mighty sin.” Peccata vicia si multiplicentur, decorum nostrum ita exterminant, ut celestis sponsi amplexibus nos separent.—“Venial sins, when multiplied, so destroy our purity that they effectually separate from Christ.”

¹ Γλῶσση ματαιὰ βημία προσρίβεται. *Æsch. Prom.*

² Ἀχαλίνων σομάτων τέλος δυστυχία. *Eurip.*

like detaining the portion of orphans, shall therefore misspend another day without revocation of the first by an act of repentance and redemption of it, and then shall throw away a week, still adding to the former account upon the first stock, will at last be answerable for a habit of idleness, and will have contracted a vain and impertinent spirit. For since things which in their own kind are lawful, become sinful by the degree; if the degree be heightened by intension, or become great like a heap of sand by a coacervation of the innumerable atoms of dust, the actions are as damnable as any of the natural daughters and productions of hell when they are entertained without scruple, and renewed without repentance, and continued without dereliction.

14. Thirdly, Although some inadvertencies of our life and lesser obedience accidentally become less hurtful, and because they are entailed upon the infirmities of a good man, and the less wary customs and circumstances of society, are also consistent with the state of grace; yet all affection to the smallest sins becomes deadly and damnable. 'He that loves his danger shall perish in it,' said the wise man. And every friendly entertainment of an undecency invites in a greater crime; for no man can love a small sin, but there are in the greater crimes of its kind more desirable flatteries and more satisfactions of sensuality than in those suckers and sprigs of sin. At first a little disobedience is proportionable to a man's temper, and his conscience is not fitted to the bulk of a great crime: but when a man hath accepted the first in

¹ Nullum peccatum est adeo veniale quod non fiat criminali dum placet. Dist. 25. sect. Nunc autem, ex St. August.

sinuation of delight, and swallowed it, that little sin is past, and needs no more to dispute for entrance ; then the next design puts in and stands in the same probability to succeed the first, and greater than the first had to make the entry. However, to love any thing that God hates is direct enmity with him ; and whatsoever the instance be, it is absolutely inconsistent with charity, and therefore incompetent with the state of grace. So that if the sin be small, it is not a small thing that thou hast given thy love to it : every such person perishes like a fool, cheaply and ingloriously.

15. Fourthly, But it also concerns the niceness and prudence of obedience to God, to stand at farther distance from vice than we usually attend to. For many times virtue and vice differ but one degree,¹ and the neighbourhood is so dangerous, that he who desires to secure his obedience and duty to God, will remove farther from the danger. For there is a rule of justice, to which if one degree more of severity be added, it degenerates into cruelty ; and a little more mercy is remissness, and want of discipline introduces licentiousness, and becomes unmercifulness as to the public, and unjust as to the particular. Now this consideration is heightened, if we observe that virtue and vice consist not in an indivisible point, but there is a latitude for either, which is not to be judged by any certain rules drawn from the nature of the thing, but to be estimated in proportion to the persons and other accidental circumstances. He that is burdened with a great charge, for whom he is bound under a curse and the crime of infidelity,

¹ *Cùm fas atque nefas exiguo fine libidinum*

Discernunt avidi.

Horat. Ode 18. lib. i.

to provide, may go farther in the acquisition, be more provident in the use of his money, & those persons for whom God hath made more ample provisions, and hath charged them with fewer burdens and engagements economical. And no man can say, that just beyond such a degree care stands covetousness, and thus far on this is carelessness; and a man may be in the conflict of death before he be aware. Now the only way to secure our obedience and duty in such cases is to remove farther off, and not to dwell upon the confines of the enemy's country. My meaning is that it is not prudent nor safe for a man to do whatsoever he lawfully may do.

16. For besides that we are often mistaken in our judgments concerning the lawfulness or unlawfulness of actions, he that will do all that he thinks he may lawfully do, if ever he does change his station, and increase in giving himself liberty will quickly arrive at doing things unlawful. It is good to keep a reserve of our liberty, and to restrain ourselves within bounds narrower than the largest sense of the commandment; that when our affections wander and enlarge themselves, some time or other they will do,) then they may enlarge beyond the ordinary, and yet be within bounds of lawfulness. That of which men make much scruple and a question at first, after an habitual resolution of it, stirs no more; but then their quest is of something beyond it. When a man hath accustomed himself to pray seven times a day, it will little trouble his peace if he omits one or two of the times; but if it be resolved then that he must please God with praying devoutly, though but thrice every day, after he hath digested the scruple

les of this first question, possibly some accidents may happen that will put his conscience and reason to dispute whether three times be indispensably necessary, and still if he be far within the bounds of lawfulness, it is well: but if he be at the margin of it, his next remove may be into dissolution and unlawfulness. He that resolves to gain all that he may lawfully this year, it is odds but next year he will be tempted to gain something unlawfully. He that, because a man may be innocently angry, will never restrain his passion, in a little time will be intemperate in his anger, and mistake both his object and the degree. Thus facetiousness and urbanity entertained with an open hand, will turn into jestings that are uncomely.

17. If you will be secure, remove your tent, well farther off. God hath given us more liberty than we may safely use. And although God is so gracious as to comply much with our infirmities; yet if we do so too, as God's goodness in indulging liberty to us was to prevent our sinning, our complying with ourselves will engage us in it. But if we imprison and confine our affections into a narrower compass, then our extravagances may be imperfect, but will not easily be criminal. The dissolution of a scrupulous and strict person is not into a vice, but into a less degree of virtue. He that makes a conscience of loud laughter, will not easily be drawn into the wantonness of balls and revellings, and the longer and more impure carnivals. This is the way to secure our obedience; and no men are so curious of their health, as they that are scrupulous of the air they breathe in.

But now for our obedience to man, that hath distinct considerations, and apart.

18. First, All obedience to man 'is for sake: for God imprinting his authority upon sons of men, like the sun reflecting upon a c produces a parelius, or a representation of his glory, though in great distances and imperfect it is the divine authority, though characterized a piece of clay, and imprinted upon a weak imperfect man. And therefore obedience to superiors must be universal in respect of persons to all superiors. This precept is expressively biblical: 'Be subject to every constitution and authority of man for the Lord's sake;' ¹ it is for the sake, and therefore to every one, 'Whether it be to the king, as supreme, or to his ministers in subordination.' That's for civil government. For ecclesiastical this; 'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch your souls, as they that must give account.' ² upon whom any ray of the Divine authority is imprinted, whether it be in greater or smaller degrees, are in proportion to their authority to be obeyed; all upon the same ground: 'for there is no power but of God.' ³ So that no infirmity, no undervaluing circumstances, no external accident, is an excuse for disobedience: ⁴ we must obey the divine authority passing through the channels of a wise, excellent, and prudent government, but to neglect the impositions of a looser head, is to worship Christ only upon the mount Tabor in the glories of his transfiguration, and to deny him upon mount Calvary, and in the clouds of his inglorious and humble passion. 'Not only to

¹ Eustath. ad Iliad. 1.

² Heb. xiii. 1.

³ 1 Pet. ii. 13.

⁴ Rom. xiii. 1.

⁵ Hor. lib. iii. Ode 1.

gentle, (so St. Peter,) but to the harsh
 '1 And it was by divine providence that many and stricter precepts of obedience were in the New Testament verified of tyrants, persecutors, idolaters, and princes; and for others amongst whom variety of disposition, there is no composition, but all excuses are removed, and of governors drawn into the sanction of authority.

Secondly, Not only to all governors, but in we must obey. 'Children, obey your all things:'² and, 'servants, obey your all things.' And this also is upon the ground: do it 'as unto Christ; as unto the not unto men.'³ But then this restrains the reality of obedience, that it may run in its own channel; 'as unto the Lord,' thereby against the divine commandment. For speaks to us by man, transmitting laws for the support of civil society, for ecclesiastical police and personal advantages, for the promotion of virtue and religion, for discountenance of vice, we are to receive it with the same reverence as if God spake himself to us immediately. When by his terror upon mount Sinai he manifested how great favour it is to speak to the ministration of our brethren, it were a great impudence, when we desire a proportionally gentle instrument of divine commands, for this very proportion despise the minister as the frogs in the apologue insulting

upon their wooden king. But then if any thing come contrary to a divine law, know it is the voice of Jacob, of the supplanter, not of the right heir; and though we must obey man for God's sake, yet we must never disobey God for man's sake. In all things else we find no exception; but, according as the superiors intend the obligation, and express it by the signature of laws, customs, interpretations, permissions, and dispensations, that is, so far as the law is obligatory in general, and not dispensed with in particular, so far obedience is a duty in all instances of acts where no sin is ingredient.

20. Thirdly, and here also the smallness and cheapness of the duty does not tolerate disobedience; for the despising of the smallest injunction is an act of as formal and direct rebellion, as when the prevarication is in a higher instance. It is here as in divine laws, but yet with some difference: for small things do so little co-operate to the end of human laws, that a smaller reason does by way of interpretation and tacit permission dispense, than can in a divine sanction, though of the lowest offices. Because God commands duties not for the end to which they of themselves do co-operate; but to make sacred his authority, and that we by our obedience may confess him to be Lord: but in human laws the authority is made sacred not primarily for itself, but principally that the laws made in order to the conservation of societies may be observed. So that in the neglect of the smallest of divine ordinances we as directly oppose God's great purpose and intendment as in greater matters; God's dominion and authority (the con-

on of which was his principal intention) is neglected :¹ but, in omitting an human imposition of small concernment, the case is different ; certain there is not any considerable violence to the public interest by a contemptible omission of a law. The thing is not small, if the commonwealth be not safe, and all her great ends secured ; but if they be, then the authority is inviolable, unless a direct contempt were intended, for the law was in order to that end, not for itself, as in the case of divine laws, but that the public may be safe.

And therefore, as great matters of human law may be omitted for great reasons, so may small matters for smaller reasons, but never with impunity ; for causelessly and contemptuously to disobey one. But in the application of the particular whether the laws themselves, or custom, or the conscience of a sincere righteous man, or of a wise and interested person, is to be the judge. But man's confidence increase from the smallness of the matter to a contempt of the authority : there are some sins whose malignity is accidentally increased by the slightness of the subject ; such as are blasphemy, perjury, and the contempt of authority. To blaspheme God for the sake of an asper or a penny, to be foresworn in order to the rescuing of a few maravides or a small fine, is a worse crime than to be perjured for the saving ten thousand pounds ; and to disobey authority, when the obedience is so easy as to put on a ring of a garment or doing of a posture, is a more and more impudent contempt, than to des-

¹ De minimis non curat lex.

pise authority imposing a great burthen of a more considerable pressure, where human infirmity may tempt to a disobedience, and lessen the crime. And let this caution also be inserted, that we do not at all neglect small impositions, if there be a direct and signal injunction in the particular instance. For as a great body of light transmitting its rays through a narrow hollowness, does by that small pyramis represent all the parts of its magnitude and glory: so it may happen that a public interest, and the concernments of authority, and the peace of a church, and the integral obedience of the subjects, and the conservation of a community, may be transferred to us by an instance in its own nature inconsiderable, such as are wearing of a cognizance, remembering of a word, carrying a branch in time of war, and things of the same nature. And therefore, when the hand of authority is stretched out and held forth upon a precept, and designs the duty upon particular reason, or with actual intuition; there is not the same facility of being dispensed with, as in the neglected and unconsidered instances of other duties.

This only I desire to be observed; that if death or any violent accident, imprisonment, loss of livelihood, or intolerable inconveniencies, be made accidentally consequent to the observing of a law merely human, the law binds not in the particular instance. No man is bound to be a martyr for a ceremony, or to die rather than break a canon, or to suffer confiscation of goods for the pertinacious keeping of a civil constitution. And it is not to be supposed that a law-giver would have decreed a rite, and bound the lives of the subjects to it, which are of a far greater value than a rite: nor

only because it were tyrannical and unreasonable, but because the evil of the law were greater than the good of it, it were against the reason of all laws, and destroys the privileges of nature ; and it puts a man into a condition as bad as the want of all laws : for nothing is civilly or naturally worse than death, to which the other evils arrive in their proportion. This is to be understood in particular and positive precepts, introduced for reasons particular ; that is, than those are which combine all societies, and which are the cement of all bodies political ; I mean, laws ritual in the church, and accidental and emergent in the state. And that which is the best sign to distinguish these laws from others, is also the reason of the assertion. Laws decreed with a penalty to the transgressors, cannot bind to an evil greater than that penalty. If it be appointed that we use a certain form of liturgy, under the forfeiture of five pounds for every omission, I am bound in conscience to obey it where I can ; but I am supposed legally to be disabled, if any tyrant-power shall threaten to kill me if I do, or make me pay an hundred pounds, or any thing greater than the forfeiture of the law. For all the civil and natural power of the law is by its coercion, and the appendant punishment. The law operates by rewards and punishments, by hope and fear ; and it is unimaginable that the law under a less penalty can oblige us in any case or accident to suffer a greater. For the compulsion of the tyrant is greater than the coercion of the law-giver ; and the prince thinking the penalty annexed to be band sufficient, intended no greater evil to the transgressor than the expressed penalty ; and therefore much less would he have them that

obey the law by any necessity be forced to a greater evil; for then, disobedience should escape better than obedience. True it is, every disobeying person that pays the penalty, is not quite discharged from all his obligation; but it is then, when his disobeying is criminal upon some other stock besides the mere breach of the law, as contempt, scandal, or the like. For the law binds the conscience indirectly and by consequence; that is, in plain language, God commands us 'to obey human laws, and the penalty will not pay for the contempt, because that is sin against God: it pays for the violation of the law, because that was all the direct transgression against man.'¹ And then who shall make him recompence for suffering more than the law requires of him? Not the prince: for it is certain, the greatest value he set upon the law was no bigger than the penalty; and the commonwealth is supposed to be sufficiently secured in her interest by the penalty, or else the law was weak, impotent, and unreasonable. Not God: for it is not an act of obedience to him, for he binds us no further to obey human laws than the law-giver himself intends or declares; who cannot reasonably be supposed so over-careful, as to bind hay with cords of silk and gold, or sumptuary laws with the threads of life; nor a father commanding his child to wait on him every meal, be thought to intend his obligation, even though the house be ready to fall on his head, or when he is to pass a sudden or unfordable flood before he can get to them. And that it may appear man ought not, it is certain God himself doth not oblige us

¹ A Gel. lib. xx. c. 1.

in all cases and in all circumstances to observe every of his positive precepts. For assembling together is a duty of God's commanding, which we are not to neglect:¹ but, if death waits at the door of these assemblies, we have the practice of the primitive and best Christians to warrant us to serve God in retirements, and cells, and wildernesses, and leave the assembling together till better opportunities. If I receive more benefit, or the commonwealth, or the church and religion any greater advantage by my particular obedience in these circumstances, (which cannot easily be supposed will be,) it is a great act of charity to do it, and then to suffer for it:² but if it be no more, that is, if it be not expressly commanded to be done, (though with loss of life, or confiscation,) it is a good charity to save my own life, or my own estate. And though the other may be better, yet I am not in all cases obliged to do that which is simply the best. It is a tolerable infirmity, and allowed amongst the very first permissions of nature, that I may preserve my life, unless it be in a very few cases; which are therefore clearly to be expressed, or else the contrary is to be presumed, as being a case most favourable. And it is considerable, that nothing is worse than death but damnation, or something that partakes of that in some of its worst ingredients; such as is a lasting torment, or a daily great misery in some other kind. And therefore, since no human law can bind a man to a worse thing than death, if obedience brings me to death, I cannot be worse when I

¹ Heb. x. 25.

² Vide Par. 2. Dis. 10. n. 11.

disobey it ; and I am not so bad, if the penalty of death be not expressed. And so for other penalties in their own proportions.

This discourse is also to be understood concerning the laws of peace, not of war ; not only because every disobedience in war may be punished with death, (according as the reason may chance,) but also because little things may be of great and dangerous consequence. But in peace it is observable, that there is no human positive superinduced law, but by the practice of all the world (which, because the permission of the prince is certainly included in it, is the surest interpretation) it is dispensed withal by ordinary necessities, by reason of lesser inconveniences and common accidents. Thus the not saying of our office daily is excused by the study of divinity, the publishing of the banns of matrimony by an ordinary incommodity, the fasting-days of the church by a little sickness or a journey ; and therefore much rather if my estate, and most of all if my life be in danger with it. And to say that in these cases there is no interpretative permission to omit the particular action, is to accuse the laws and the lawgiver, the one of unreasonableness, the other of uncharitableness.

22. Fourthly, These considerations are upon the execution of the duty ; but even towards man our obedience must have a mixture of the will and choice, like as our injunction of obedience to the divine command. ‘ With good will doing service,’ saith the apostle. For it is impossible to secure the duty of inferiors but by conscience and good will ; unless provision could be made against all

their secret arts and concealments and escapings, which as no providence can foresee, so no diligence can cure. It is but an eye-service whatsoever is compelled and involuntary; nothing rules a man in private but God and his own desires: and they give laws in a wilderness, and accuse in a cloister, and do execution in a closet, if there be any prevarication.

23. Fifthly, But obedience to human laws goes no further, we are not bound to obey with a direct and particular act of understanding, as in all divine sanctions. For so long as our superiors are fallible, though it be highly necessary we conform our wills to their innocent laws, yet it is not a duty we should think the laws most prudent or convenient, because all laws are not so; but it may concern the interest of humility and self-denial to be subject to an inconvenient, so it be not a sinful command. For so we must choose an affliction when God offers it, and give God thanks for it; and yet we may cry under the smart of it, and call to God for ease and remedy. And yet it were well if inferiors would not be too busy in disputing the prudence of their governors, and the convenience of their constitutions. Whether they be sins or no in the execution, and to our particulars, we are concerned to look to. I say, as to our particulars; for an action may be a sin in the prince commanding it, and yet innocent in the person executing; as in the case of unjust wars, in which the subject, who cannot, ought not to be a judge, yet must be a minister. And it is notorious in the case of executing an unjust sentence, in which not the executioner, but the judge is only

the unjust person :¹ and he that serves his prince in an unjust war, is but the executioner of an unjust sentence. But whatever goes further, does but undervalue the person, slight the government, and unloose the golden cords of discipline. For we are not entrusted in providing for degrees, so we secure the kind and condition of our actions. And since God, having derived rays and beams of majesty, and transmitted it in parts upon several states of men, hath fixed human authority and dominion in the golden candlestick of understanding, he that shall question the prudence of his governor,² or the wisdom of his sanction, does unclasp the golden rings that tie the purple upon the prince's shoulder : he tempts himself with a reason to disobey, and extinguish the light of majesty, by overturning the candlestick, and hiding the opinion of his wisdom and understanding. And let me say this : he that is confident of his own understanding and reasonable powers, (and who is more than he that thinks himself wiser than the laws ?) needs no other devil in the neighbourhood, no tempter but himself to pride and vanity, which are the natural parents of disobedience.

24. But a man's disobedience never seems so reasonable as when the subject is forbidden to do an act of piety,³ commanded indeed in the general, but uncommanded in certain circumstances.

¹ *Is damnum dat qui jubet dare : ejus verò nulla culpa est cui parere necesse sit.* Ulpian. lib. cxxx.—“He commits the injury who commands : he who must needs obey is innocent.”

² *Μὴ ἐριζε γονεῦσι, καὶν δίκαια λέγῃς.* Laert.—“Strive not with parents, though you were even in the right.”

³ *Modum autem tenere in eo difficile est quod bonum esse credideris.* Sen. ep. 23.—“It is difficult to be temperate in that which we believe to be good.”

And forward piety and assiduous devotion, a great and indiscreet mortifier, is often tempted to think no authority can restrain the fervours and distempers of zeal in such holy exercises: and yet it is very often as necessary to restrain the indiscretions of a forward person, as to excite the remissness of the cold and frozen. Such persons were the Sarabites spoken of by Cassian,¹ who were greater labourers and stricter mortifiers than the religious in families and colleges; and yet they endured no superior nor laws. But such customs as these are humiliation without humility, humbling the body and exalting the spirit: or indeed sacrifices, and no obedience. It was an argument of the great wisdom of the fathers of the desert, when they heard of the prodigious severities exercised by Simeon Stylites upon himself, they sent one of the religious to him, with power to enquire what was his manner of living, and what warrant he had for such a rigorous undertaking; giving in charge to command him to give it over, and to live in a community with them, and according to the common institution of those religious families. The messenger did so, and immediately Simeon removed his foot from his pillar, with a purpose to descend; but the other, according to his commission, called to him to stay, telling him his station and severity was from God.² And he that in so great a piety was humble and obedient, did not undertake that strictness out of singularity, nor did it transport him to vanity; for that he had received from the fathers to make judgment of the man, and of his institution;

¹ Collat. xviii. c. 17.

² Apud Evagrium. De eodem Stylite consulat lector Epiph. lib. i. c. 13. Theod. et 7. Synod. gener. et Baron. ad A. D. 432.

whereas if upon pretence of the great holiness of that course he had refused the command, the spirit of the person was to be declared caitive and imprudent, and the man driven from his troublesome and ostentous vanity.

25. Our fast, our prayers, our watchings, our intentions of duty, our frequent communions and all exterior acts of religion, are to be guided by our superior, if he sees cause to restrain or assuage any excrescence. For a wound may heal too fast, and then the tumour of the flesh is proud, not healthful: and so may the indiscretions of religion swell to vanity, when we think they grow towards perfection. But when we can endure the caustics and correctives of our spiritual guides in those things in which we are most apt to please ourselves, then our obedience is regular and humble, and in other things there is less of danger. There is a story told of a very religious person, whose spirit in the ecstasy of devotion was transported to the clarity of a vision, and he seemed to converse personally with the holy Jesus, feeling from such intercourse great spiritual delights and huge satisfactions. In the midst of these joys the bell called to prayers, and he, used to the strictness and well instructed in the necessities of obedience, went to the church; and having finished his devotions, returned, and found the vision in the same posture of glories and entertainment; which also said to him, "Because thou hast left me, thou hast found me: for if thou hadst not left me, I had presently left thee." ¹ Whatever the story be, I am sure it is

¹ Cassian. Collat. 4. Abbat. Dam. c. 20. et S. Basil. Exhort. ad vitam Monast. S. Greg. lib. xxxv. Moral c. 13. S. Bern. de. c. vitæ et morum instit. c. 1.

good parable: for the way to increase spiritual efforts is, to be strict in the offices of humble obedience; and we never lose any thing of our , by laying it aside to attend a duty. And starch reports more honour of Agesilaus's prudence and modesty, than of his gallantry and military fortune: for he was more honourable by obeying the decree of the Spartan senate, recalling a from the midst of his triumphs, than he could have been by finishing the war with prosperous success and disobedience.¹

16. Our obedience, being guided by these rules, urged to us by the consignation of divine precepts and the loud voice of thunder, even sealed a signet of God's right hand, the signature of latest judgments. For God did with greater severity punish the rebellion of Korah and his company, than the express murmurs against him; nay, than the high crime of idolatry. For that crime God visited them with a sword; but for disobedience and mutiny against their superiors, he made the earth to swallow some of them, and from heaven to consume the rest: to show that rebellion is to be punished by the conspiracy of heaven and earth, as it is hateful and contrary both to God and man. And it is not less to observe, that obedience to man, being it for God's sake, and yet to a person clothed with the same circumstances and the same infirmities with ourselves, is a greater instance of humility, than to obey God immediately, whose authority is divine, whose presence is terrible, whose power is infinite, and not at all depressed by exterior dis-

¹ A. Gell. lib. ix. c. 13.

advantages or lessening appearances: just as it is both greater faith and greater charity to relieve a poor saint for Jesus' sake, than to give any thing to Christ himself, if he should appear in all the robes of glory and immediate address. For it is to God and to Christ, and wholly for their sakes, and to them that the obedience is done, or the charity expressed: but themselves are persons whose awfulness, majesty, and veneration would rather force than invite obedience or alms. But when God and his only Son stand behind the cloud, and send their servants to take the homage or the charity, it is the same as if it were done to them, but receives the advantage of acceptance by the accidental adherences of faith and humility to the several actions respectively. When a king comes to rebels in person, it strikes terror and veneration into them, who are too apt to neglect and despise the persons of his ministers, whom they look upon as their fellow-subjects, and consider not in the exaltation of a deputed majesty. Charles the Fifth found a happy experience of it at Gaunt in Flanders, whose rebellion he appeased by his presence, which he could hardly have done by his army. But if the king's authority be as much revered in his deputy as it is sacred in his own person, it is the greater humility and more confident obedience. And as it is certain that he is the most humble that submits to his inferiors; so in the same proportion, the lower and meaner the instrument upon which God's authority is borne, the higher is the grace that teaches us to stoop so low. I do not say that a sin against human laws is greater than a prevarication against a divine commandment: as the instances may be, the dis-

tance is next to infinite; and to touch the earth with our foot within the octaves of Easter, or to taste flesh upon days of abstinence, (even in those places and to those persons where they did or do oblige,) have no consideration if they be laid in balance against the crimes of adultery, or blasphemy, or oppression; because these crimes cannot stand with the reputation and sacredness of divine authority; but those others may in most instances very well consist with the ends of government, which are severally provided for in the diversity of sanctions respectively. But if we make our instances to other purposes, we find, that to mutiny in an army, or to keep private assemblies in a monarchy, are worse than a single thought or morose delectation in a fancy of impurity; because those others destroy government more than these destroy charity of God or obedience. But then though the instances may vary the conclusion, yet the formal reason is alike, and disobedience to man is a disobedience against God: for God's authority and not man's is imprinted upon the superior; and it is like sacred fire in an earthen censer, as holy as if it were kindled with the fanning of a cherub's wing, or placed just under the propitiatory upon a golden altar: and it is but a gross conceit which cannot distinguish religion from its porter, Isis from the beast that carried it. So that in all disobedience to men, in proportion to the greatness of the matter, or the malice of the person, or his contradiction to the ends of government and combinations of society, we may use the words by which the prophet upbraided Israel: 'Is it not enough that you are grievous unto men, but will you grieve my God

also ?'¹ It is a contempt of the Divinity, and the affront is transmitted to God himself, when we despise the power which God hath ordained ; and all power of every lawful superior is such : the Spirit of God being witness in the highest measure, ' Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness as idolatry.'² It is spoken of rebellion against God, and all rebellion is so ; for, ' He that despiseth you, despiseth me,'³ saith the blessed Jesus : that is menace enough in the instance of spiritual regiment. And, ' you are gathered together against the Lord,' saith Moses to the rebellious princes in the conspiracy of Dathan : that is for the temporal. And to encourage this duty, I shall use no other words than those of Achilles in Homer : " They that obey in this world, are better than they that command in hell."⁴

A PRAYER

FOR THE GRACE OF HOLY OBEDIENCE.

I.

O Lord and blessed Saviour Jesus, by whose obedience many became righteous, and reparations were made of the ruins brought to human nature by the disobedience of Adam ; thou

¹ Isa. vii. 13.

² 1 Sam. xv. 23.

³ Ἡμῖν δὲ πολλῶν νόμων ἢ καλῶν ὄντων, κάλλιστος ἑστὶς Τιμᾶν βασιλέα, ἢ προσκυνεῖν εἰκόνα Θεῷ πάντα σώζοντος, Plutarch. in Themist.—" We have many and excellent laws ; but that is the best which teaches us to honour the king, and worship every image of the living God."

⁴ Ὅς μάχεται μακάρεσσιν, ἐμῷ βασιλῇ μάχοιτο.

⁵ Βελοίμην κ' ἐπάρηρος ἑὼν θητεύεμεν ἄλλῳ

Ἄνδρὶ παρ' ἀκλήρῳ, ᾧ μὴ βίोटος πολὺς εἴη,

Ἡ πᾶσι νεκύεσσι καταφθιμένοισιν ἀνάσσειν. Od. λ'.

into the world with many great and holy purposes con-
our salvation, and hast given us a great precedent of obe-
which that thou mightest preserve to thy heavenly Fa-
thou didst neglect thy life, and becamest obedient even to the
of the cross. O, let me imitate so blessed an example,
the merits of thy obedience let me obtain the grace of
thy, and abnegation of all my own desires in the clearest
subjection of my will ; that I may will and refuse in conform-
ity sacred laws and holy purposes ; that I may do all thy
perfectly, choosingly, humbly, confidently, and continually ;
that thy will may be done upon me with much mercy and
a dispensation of thy providence. Amen.

II.

O, let my understanding adhere to and be satisfied in the
great wisdom of thy commandments ; let my affections
and their desires, and all my other faculties be set on daily
in performance of them ; and let my love to obey thee
be dutiful to my superiors, upon whom the impresses of
thy authority are set by thine own hand, that I may never despise
persons, nor refuse their injunctions, nor choose mine own
nor murmur at their burdens, nor dispute the prudence of
thy action, nor excuse myself, nor pretend difficulties or im-
possibilities ; but that I may be indifferent in my desires, and
submit to the will of those whom thou hast set over me : that
as all thy creatures obey thy word, I alone may not disorder
thy action, and cancel those bands and intermedial links of sub-
jection, whereby my duty should pass to thee and thy
will ; but that my obedience being united to thy obedience, I
may also have my portion in the glories of thy kingdom, O
our Lord and blessed Saviour Jesus. Amen.

*Considerations upon the Presentation of Jesus in the
Temple.*

THE holy virgin mother, according to the
law of Moses, at the expiration of a certain time,

came to the temple to be purified. Although in her sacred parturition she had contracted no legal impurity, yet she exposed herself to the public opinion and common reputation of an ordinary condition: and still amongst all generations she is in all circumstances accounted blessed, and her reputation no tittle altered, save only that it is made the more sacred by this testimony of her humility. But this we are taught from the consequence of this instance; that if an end principally designed in any duty, should be supplied otherwise in any particular person, the duty is nevertheless to be observed; and then the obedience and public order is reason enough for the observation, though the proper end of its designation be wanting in the single person. Thus is fasting designed for mortification of the flesh,¹ and killing all its unruly appetites; and yet married persons, who have another remedy, and a virgin, whose temple is hallowed by a gift and the strict observances of chastity, may be tied to the duty; and if they might not, then fasting were nothing else but a publication of our impure desires, and an exposing the person to the confidence of a bold temptation, whilst the young men did observe the faster to be tempted from within. But the holy virgin from these acts (of which in signification she had no need, because she sinned not in the conception, nor was impure in the production) expressed other virtues besides obedience; such as were humble thoughts of herself, devotion, and reverence to public sanctions, religion, and charity, which were like the pure leaves of the whitest

¹ Vide Rodriguez in explic. Bullæ cruciatæ; and Sir Tho. Moore against Tindal.

ily, fit to represent the beauties of her innocence, but were veiled and shadowed by the sacramental of the Mosaic law.

2. The holy virgin received the greatest favour that any of the daughters of Adam ever did, and knowing from whence and for whose glory she had received it, returns the holy Jesus in a present to God again; for she had nothing so precious as himself to make oblation of. And besides that 'every first-born among the males was holy to the Lord,' this child had an eternal and essential sanctity; and, until he came into the world, and was made apt for her to make a present of him, there was never in the world any act of adoration proportionable to the honour of the great God; but now there was, and the holy virgin made it, when she presented the holy child Jesus. And now, besides that we are taught to return to God whatsoever we have received from him, if we unite our offerings and devotions to this holy present, we shall, by the merit and excellency of this oblation, exhibit to God an offertory, in which he cannot but delight for the combination's sake and society of his holy Son.

3. The holy mother brought five sicles and a pair of turtle-doves to redeem the Lamb of God from the anathema; because every first-born was to be sacrificed to God, or redeemed, if it was clean: it was the poor man's price, and the holy Jesus was never set at the greater prices when he was estimated upon earth. For he that was Lord of the kingdom, chose his portion among the poor of this world, that he might advance the poor to the riches of his inheritance; and so it was from his nativity hither. For at his birth he was poor,

at his circumcision poor, and in the likeness of a sinner; at his presentation poor, and like a slave and a servant, for he chose to be redeemed with an ignoble price. The five sicles were given to the priest for the redemption of the child; and if his parents were not able, he was to be a servant to the temple, and to minister in the inferior offices to the priest: and this was God's seizure and consecration of him. For although all the servants of God are his inheritance; yet the ministers of religion, who derive their portion of temporal goods from his title, who live upon the corban, and eat of the meat of the altar, which is God's peculiar property, come nearer to his holiness by the addresses of their immediate ministration, are God's own upon earth, and a distinct challenge. But because Jesus was to be the prince of another ministry, as the chief-priest of another order, he was released from attending the Mosaic rites, which he could abolish, that he might do his Father's business in establishing the evangelical. Only remember that the ministers of religion are but God's usufructuaries: as they are not lords of God's portion, they therefore must dispense it like stewards, not as masters; so the people are not their patrons, nor paying, nor they their beneficiaries in respect of tithes or other provisions of maintenance, but owe for it to none but to God himself. We should also be considered, that in all sacrilegious detentions of ecclesiastical rights, God is the principally injured.

4. The turtle-doves were offered also with the signification of another mystery.¹ In the

¹ Sed Pudicitia illis prima, et nútri nota adulteria: et fidem non violant. Plin. lib. x. c. 13.

marriage, although the permissions of natives are such as are most ordinate to their avoiding of fornication, the alleviation of cal cares and vexations, and the production of children, and mutual comfort and support ; apertures and permissions of marriage with restraints of modesty and prudence, that transgression of the just order to such ends is a fault, and besides these, there may be degrees of deviation or obliquity of intention, or too much complacency, or unhandsome preparations, or unsacramental thoughts. In which cases, because we have no determined rule of licence, and the analogy of the rite, and the precepts of our religion, which allow in some cases some less, and always uncertain latitudes, at least we know, there may be lighter transgressions of something that we know not of : and for the purification of the woman it is supposed the offering was made ; and the turtures, by a libation, did deprecate a supposed irregularity, but by being a chaste and marital emblem, confessed the obliquity (if any were) was the protection of the sacred bands of marriage and therefore so excusable as to be expiated by a sheep offering. And what they did in hieroglyphics, Christians must do in the exposition ; be observers of the main rites and principal obligations, and not neglectful to deprecate the lesser imperfections or loosenesses of the too sensual applications. God had at that instant so ordered, that, for friends of his own and theirs, two very holy persons, of diverse sexes and like piety, Simeon and Anna, the one who lived an active and secular, the other a retired and contemplative life, should

come into the temple by revelation and direct the Holy Spirit, and see him whom they and the world did look for, the Lord's Christ, the consolation of Israel. They saw him, they rejoiced, they worshipped, they prophesied, they sung hymns : and old Simeon did comprehend and embrace in his arms him that filled all the world and was then so satisfied that he desired to live no longer : God had verified his promise, had shown him the Messiah, had filled his heart with joy and made his old age honourable ; and now, after this sight, no object could be pleasant but the contemplation of paradise. For as a man who hath stared freely upon the face and beauties of the sun and is blind and dark to objects of a less splendour, is forced to shut his eyes, that he may, through degrees of darkness, perceive the inferior beauties of more proportioned objects ; so was old Simeon, when his eyes were so filled with the glories of this vision, that he was willing to close them in his old age, that he might be brought into the communications of eternity ; and he could never more find comfort in any other object this world could minister. For such is the excellency of spiritual things, when they have once filled the corners of our hearts, and made us highly sensible and apprehensive of the interior beauties of God and of his kingdom, all things of this world are flat and empty and unsatisfying vanities, as unpleasant as the taste of vinegar to a tongue filled with the spirit of the most precious wines. And until we are so dead to the world, as to apprehend no gust or freer satisfaction in placency in exterior objects, we never have obtained Christ, or have had our cups overflow with devotion, or are filled with the spirit. When

alice is filled with holy oil, with the anointing
 om above, it will entertain none of the waters of
 tterness; or if it does, they are thrust to the
 otom; they are the lowest of our desires, and
 erefore only admitted, because they are natural
 id constituent.

6. The good old prophetess Anna had lived
 ng in chaste widowhood, in the service of the
 mple, in the continual offices of devotion, in fast-
 g and prayer; and now came the happy instant
 which God would give her a great benediction,
 and an earnest of a greater. The returns of prayer
 and the blessings of piety are certain; and though
 ot dispensed according to the expectances of our
 arrow conceptions, yet shall they so come, at such
 mes and such measures, as shall crown the piety,
 and satisfy the desires, and reward the expectation.
 t was in the temple, the same place where she
 ad for so many years poured out her heart to
 led; that God poured forth his heart to her, sent
 his Son from his bosom, and there she received his
 benediction. Indeed, in such places God does
 not particularly exhibit himself, and blessing
 es along with him wherever he goes. In holy
 laces God hath put his holy name, and to holy
 ersons God does oftentimes manifest the interior
 and more secret glories of his holiness; provided
 hey come thither, as old Simeon and Anna did,
 y the motions of the Holy Spirit, not with designs
 f vanity, or curiosity, or sensuality: for such
 pirts as those come to profane and desecrate the
 use, and unhallow the person, and provoke the
 ity of the place, and blast us with unwholesome
 in.

7. But 'Joseph and Mary wondered at these

things which were spoken,' and treasured them in their hearts ; and they became matter of devout and mental prayer, or meditation.

THE PRAYER.

O eternal God, who by the inspirations of thy Holy Spirit direct thy servants, Simeon and Anna, to the temple, at the presentation of the holy child Jesus, that thou mightest verify thy promise, and manifest thy Son, and the piety of holy people, who longed for redemption : the coming of the Messias ; give me the perpetual assistance of the same Spirit to be as a monitor and a guide to me, leading me in all holy actions, and to the embracements and possessions of thy glorious Son : and remember all thy faithful people, who wait for the consolation and redemption of the church from her miseries and persecutions, and at last satisfy their desires with the revelations of thy mercies and salvation. Thou hast adopted thy holy child, and set him up for a sign of thy mercies, and representation of thy glories. Lord, let no act, or thought, or word of mine ever be in contradiction to this blessed sign : let it be for the ruin of all my vices, and all the powers that the world employs against the church, and for the raising up of all virtues and graces which thou didst design me in the purpose of eternity : but let my portion never be amongst the incredulous, the scornful, or the heretical, or the profane, or any of the like, who stumble at this stone which thou hast laid for the foundation of thy church, and the structures of a virtuous life. Remember me with much mercy and compassion, when the sword of sorrow and afflictions shall pierce my heart ; first transfix me with love, then all the troubles of this world will be consignations of joys of a better : which grant for the mercies and the sake of thy holy child Jesus. Amen.

DISCOURSE III.

Of Meditation.

1. IF in the definition of meditation, I should call it an unaccustomed and unpractised duty, I could speak a truth, though somewhat inartificially: for not only the interior beauties and brighter excellencies are as unfelt as ideas and abstractions, but also the practice and common knowledge of the duty itself are strangers to us, like the retirements of the deep, or the undiscovered treasures of the Indian hills. And this is a very great cause of the dryness and expiration of men's devotion, because our souls are so little refreshed with the waters and holy dews of meditation. We go to our prayers by chance, or order, or by determination of accidental occurrences; and we recite them as we read a book; and sometimes we are sensible of the duty, and a flash of lightning makes the room bright; and our prayers end, and the lightning is gone, and we as dark as ever. We draw our water from standing pools, which are never filled but with sudden showers, and therefore are dry so often: whereas, if we should draw water from the fountains of our Saviour, and derive them through the channel of diligent and prudent meditations, our devotion would be a continual current, and safe against the barrenness of frequent droughts.

2. For meditation is an attention and application of spirit to divine things; a searching out all instruments to a holy life, a devout consideration of them, and a production of those affections which are in a direct order to the love of God and a pious

conversation. Indeed meditation is all that great instrument of piety whereby it is made prudent, and reasonable, and orderly, and perpetual. For supposing our memory instructed with the knowledge of such mysteries and revelations as are apt to entertain the spirit, the understanding is first and best employed in the consideration of them, and then the will in their reception, when they are duly prepared and so transmitted ; and both these in such manner and to such purposes, that they become the magazine and great repositories of grace, and instrumental to all designs of virtue.

3. For the understanding is not to consider the matter of any meditation in itself, or as it determines in natural excellencies or unworthiness respectively, or with a purpose to furnish itself with notion and riches of knowledge ; for that is like the winter sun, it shines, but warms not ; but in such order as themselves are put in the designations of theology, in the order of divine laws in their spiritual capacity, and as they have influence upon holiness. For the understanding here is something else besides the intellectual power of the soul ; it is the spirit ; that is, it is celestial in its application, as it is spiritual in its nature : and we may understand it well by considering the beatifical portions of soul and body in their future glories. For therefore even our bodies in the resurrection shall be spiritual, because the operation of them shall be in order to spiritual glories, and their natural actions (such as are seeing and speaking) shall have a spiritual object and supernatural end : and here, as we partake of such excellencies and co-operate to such purposes, men are more or less spiritual. And so is the understanding taken from its first

and lowest ends of resting in notion and ineffective contemplation, and is made spirit; that is, wholly ruled and guided by God's Spirit to supernatural ends and spiritual employments; so that it understands and considers the motions of 'the heavens,' to 'declare the glory of God,' the prodigies and alterations in 'the firmament' to demonstrate 'his handy work;' it considers the excellent order of creatures, that we may not disturb the order of creation, or dissolve the golden chain of subordination. Aristotle and Porphyry, and the other Greek philosophers, studied the heavens, to search out their natural causes, and production of bodies; the wiser Chaldees and Assyrians studied the same things, that they might learn their influences upon us, and make predictions of contingencies; the more moral Egyptian described his theorems in hieroglyphics and fantastic representments, to teach principles of policy, economy, and other prudencies of morality and secular negociation: but the same philosophy, when it is made Christian, considers as they did, but to greater purposes, even that from the book of the creatures we may glorify the Creator, and hence derive arguments of worship and religion: this is Christian philosophy.

4. I instance only in considerations natural to spiritual purposes; but the same is the manner in all meditation, whether the matter of it be nature or revelation. For if we think of hell, and consider the infinity of its duration, and that its flames last as long as God lasts, and thence conjecture, upon the rules of proportion, why a finite creature may have an infinite, unnatural duration; or think by what ways a material fire can torment an immaterial substance; or why the devils, who are intel-

ligent and wise creatures, should be so foolish as to hate God, from whom they know every rivulet of amability derives; this is to study, not to meditate; for meditation considers any thing that may best make us to avoid the place, and to quit a vicious habit, or master and rectify an untoward inclination, or purchase a virtue, or exercise one. So that meditation is an act of understanding put to the right use.

5. For the holy Jesus coming to redeem us from the bottomless pit, did it by lifting us up out of the puddles of impurity, and the unwholesome waters of vanity; he redeemed us from our vain conversation: and our understandings had so many vanities, that they were made instruments of great impiety. The unlearned and ruder nations had fewer virtues, but they had also fewer vices, than the wise empires, that ruled the world with violence and wit together. The softer Asians had lust and intemperance in a full chalice;¹ but their understandings were ruder than the finer Latins; for these men's understanding distilled wickedness as through a limbec, and the Romans drank spirits and the sublimed quintessences of villany; whereas the other made themselves drunk with the lees and cheaper instances of sin. So that the understanding is not an idle and useless faculty, but naturally drives to practice, and brings guests into the inward cabinet of the will, and there they are entertained and feasted. And those understandings which did not serve the baser end of vices, yet were unprofitable for the

¹ Τὰς Περσῶν βασιλεῖς ὑπὸ τρυφῆς προκηρύττειν τοὺς ἐφευρίσκουσι τινα καινὴν ἡδονὴν ἀργυρίῳ πλῆθος. Athen. l. iv.—“The Persian monarchs offered a rich reward to any one who should discover a new pleasure.”

most part, and furnished their inward rooms with glasses and beads, and trifles fit for an American mart. From all these impurities and vanities Jesus hath redeemed all his disciples, and not only thrown out of his temples all the impure rites of Flora and Cybele, but also the trifling and unprofitable ceremonies of the more sober deities; not only vices, but useless and unprofitable speculations, and hath consecrated our head into a temple, our understanding to spirit, our reason to religion, our study to meditation. And this is the first part of the sanctification of our spirit.

6. And this was the cause holy Scripture commands the duty of meditation in proportion still to the excellencies of piety and a holy life, to which it is highly and aptly instrumental. ‘Blessed is the man that meditates in the law of the Lord day and night.’¹ And the reason of the proposition and the use of the duty is expressed to this purpose: ‘Thy words have I hid in my heart, that I should not sin against thee.’² The placing and fixing those divine considerations in our understandings and hiding them there, are designs of high Christian prudence, that they with advantage may come forth in the expresses of a holy life. For what in the world is more apt and natural to produce humility, than to meditate upon the low stoopings and descents of the holy Jesus, to the nature of a man, to the weaknesses of a child, to the poverties of a stable, to the ignobleness of a servant, to the shame of the cross, to the pains of cruelty, to the dust of death, to the title of a sinner, and to the wrath of God? By this instance poverty is made

¹ Psal. i. 1, 2.

² Ibid. cxix. 11.

honourable, and humility is sanctified and noble, and the contradictions of nature are all fitted for a wise election. Thus hatred of shame of ourselves, confusion at the sense of man misery, the love of God, confidence in his promises, desires of heaven, holy resolutions, mortification of our own appetites, conformity to his divine will, oblations of ourselves, repentance and mortification, are the proper emanations from the mortification of the sordidness of sin, our proneness to our daily miseries as issues of divine vengeance, the glories of God, his infinite unalterable verities, the satisfactions in the vision of God, the rectitude of piety, the rectitude of the laws of God, and the effect of his sanctions, God's supreme and universal dominion, and his certain malediction of sinners. And when any one of these considerations is taken to pieces, and so placed in the room of application, that a piece of duty is conjoined with a piece of the mystery, and the whole office of prayer is the purchase of a grace, or the extermination of sin; it is like opening our windows to let in the light and the wind: and holiness is as proportionable an effect to this practice, as glory is to a persevering holiness, by way of reward and moral causality.

7. For all the affections that are in man are either natural, or by chance, or by the influence of reason and discourse. Our natural affections are not worthy the entertainments of a Christian; they must be supernatural and divine, that put us into the hopes of perfection and felicities. These other that are good, unless they come from meditation, they are but accidental, and set like the evening sun: but if they be produced upon the strengths of pious meditation, they are as perfect.

as they are reasonable, and excellent in proportion to the piety of the principle. A garden that is watered with short and sudden showers is more uncertain in its fruits and beauties, than if a rivulet waters it with a perpetual distilling and constant humectation. And just such are the short emissions and unpremeditated resolutions of piety begotten by 'a dash of holy rain from heaven, whereby God sometimes uses to call the careless but to taste what excellencies of piety they neglect; but if they be not produced by the reason of religion, and the philosophy of meditation, they have but the life of a fly or a tall gourd, they come into the world only to say they had a being; you could scarce know their length but by measuring the ground they cover in their fall.

8. For since we are more moved by material and sensible objects than by things merely speculative and intellectual, and generals, even in spiritual things, are less perceived and less motive than particulars; meditation frames the understanding part of religion to the proportions of our nature and our weakness, by making some things more circumstance and material, and the more spiritual to be particular, and therefore the more applicable; and the mystery is made like the gospel to the apostles: 'Our eyes do see, and our ears do hear, and our hands do handle' thus much of the word of life, as is prepared for us in the meditation.

9. First, and therefore every wise person, that intends to furnish himself with affections of religion, or detestation against a vice, or glorifications of a mystery, still will proportion the mystery, and fit it with such circumstances of fancy and application, as by observation of himself he knows aptest

to make impression. It was a wise design of Mark Antony when he would stir up the people to revenge the death of Cæsar, he brought his body to the pleading-place, he showed his wounds, held up the rent mantle, and showed them the garment that he put on that night in which he beat the Nervii; that is, in which he won a victory for which his memory was so dear to them; he showed them that wound which pierced his heart, in which they were placed by so dear a love that he made them his heirs, and left to their public use places of delight and pleasure: and then it was natural, when he had made those things present to them which had once moved their love and his honour, that grief at the loss of so honourable and so loved a person should succeed; and then they were lords of all, their sorrow and revenge seldom slept in two beds. And thus holy meditation produces the passions and desires it intends, it makes the objects present and almost sensible, it renews the first passions by a fiction of imagination; it passes from the paschal parlour to Cedron, it tells the drops of sweat, and measures them, and finds them as big as drops of blood, and then conjectures at the greatness of our sins; it fears in the midst of Christ's agonies, it hears his groans, it spies Judas's lantern afar off, it follows Jesus to Gabbatha, and wonders at his innocence and their malice, and feels the stroke of the whip, and shrinks the head when the crown of thorns is thrust hard upon his holy brows, and at last goes step by step with Jesus, and carries part of the cross, and is nailed fast with sorrow and compassion, and dies with love. For if the soul be principle of its own actions, it can produce the same effects by reflex acts of the under-

ding, when it is assisted by the imaginative, as when it sees the thing acted. Only let the imitation be as minute, particular, and circumstantiated as it may: for a widow by representing caresses of her dead husband's love produces sorrow, and the new affections of a sad endearment. It is too sure, that the recalling the circumstances of a past impurity does rekindle the flame, entertain the fancy with the burnings of an unquenchable fire: and this happens not by any advances of vice, but by the nature of the thing, and efficacy of circumstances. So does holy meditation produce those impresses and signatures which are the proper effects of the mystery, if prepared in a right line and representation.

0. Secondly, He that means to meditate in the best order to the productions of piety, must be inquisitive for the highest mysteries, but the nearest propositions are to him of the greatest use and evidence. For meditation is the duty of all, therefore God hath fitted such matter for it which is proportioned to every understanding; but the greatest mysteries of Christianity are the nearest, and yet most fruitful of meditation, and most useful to the production of piety. High speculations are as barren as the tops of cedars; but the fundamentals of Christianity are fruitful as the valleys or the creeping vine. For know, that it is no meditation, but it may be an illusion, when you consider mysteries to become more remote, without thoughts of improving piety. Let your affections be as high as they can climb towards God, so your considerations be humble, useful, and practically mysterious. 'Oh! that I had the wings of a dove, that I might fly away

and be at rest!' said David. The wings of eagle would have carried him higher, but yet innocent dove did furnish him with the emblem to represent his humble design ; and lo meditations might sooner bring him to rest in G It was a saying of Ægidius : " That an old an simple woman, if she loves Jesus, may be gre than was brother Bonaventure." Want of learn and disability to consider great secrets of theol does not at all retard our progress to spiritual fections : love to Jesus may be better promoted the plainer understandings of honest and unlett people, than by the finer and more exalted sp lations of great clerks that have less devot For although the way of serving God by the derstanding be the best and most lasting ; y is not necessary the understanding should be dre with troublesome and laborious notions. ' reason that is in religion is the surest principle engage our services, and more perpetual than sweetnesses and the motives of affection : but e honest man's understanding is then best furni with the discourses and the reasonable part religion, when he knows those mysteries of reli upon which Christ and his apostles did bui holy life, and the superstructures of piety : t are the best materials of his meditation.

11. So that meditation is nothing else but using of all those arguments, motives, and irr tions, which God intended to be instrument piety. It is a composition of both ways ; f stirs up our affections by reason and the wa understanding, that the wise soul may be sati in the reasonableness of the thing, and the a tionate may be entertained with the sweetness

holy passion; that our judgment be determined by discourse, and our appetites made active by the caresses of a religious fancy. And therefore the use of meditation is, to consider any of the mysteries of religion with purposes to draw from it rules of life, or affections of virtue, or detestation of vice: and from hence the man rises to devotion, and mental prayer, and intercourse with God; and after that he rests himself in the bosom of beatitude, and is swallowed up with the comprehensions of love and contemplation. These are the several degrees of meditation. But let us first understand that part of it which is duty: and then, if any thing succeed of a middle condition between duty and reward, we will consider also how that duty is to be performed, and how the reward is to be managed, that it may prove to be no illusion. Therefore I add also this consideration:

12. Thirdly, Whatever pious purposes and deliberations are entertained in the act of meditation, they are carefully to be maintained and thrust forward to actual performances, although they were indefinite and indeterminate, and no other ways decreed but by resolutions and determinations of reason and judgment. For God assists every pious action according to its exigence and capacity, and therefore blesses holy meditations with results of reason, and prepossessions dogmatically decreeing the necessity of virtue, and the convenience of certain exercises in order to the purchase of it. He then that neglects to actuate such discourses, loses the benefit of his meditation; he is gone no further than when he first set out, and neglects the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. For if at any time it

be certain what spirit it is that speaks within soul, it is most certain that it is the good Spirit moves us to an act of virtue in order to acquire the habit. And when God's grace hath assisted us so far in our meditations that we understand our duty, and are moved with present arguments if we put not forth our hand and make use of them, we do nothing towards our duty; and are not certain that God will create graces in us if we do the soul. Let every pious person think of the conclusion of reason in his meditation to be passed an obligation upon him: and if he decreed that fasting so often, and doing so many religious acts, is convenient and conducing to the production of a grace he is in pursuit of, let him know that every such decree and reasonable proposition is the grace of God, instrumental to the part of his assistance, and therefore in no case to be extinguished.

13. Fourthly, In meditation let the understanding be restrained, and under such prudent control and confinement, that it wander not from one course to another, till it hath perceived something from the first; either that his soul be instructed in a duty, or moved by a new argument, or confirmed in an old, or determined to some exercise and medial action of religion, or hath broke out into some prayers and intercourse with God in order to the production of a virtue. And this is the principal design of the spouse in the Canticles of Solomon: 'I adjure you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up nor awake my love till he please.'

¹ Cant. iii. 5.

it is lightness of spirit to pass over a field of flowers and to fix nowhere, but to leave it without carrying some honey with us : unless the subject be of itself barren and unfruitful, and then why was it chosen ? or that it is made so by our indisposition, and then indeed it is to be quitted. But, (it is St. Chrysostom's simile,) as a lamb sucking the breast of its dam and mother, moves the head from one part to another till it hath found a distilling fontinel, and then it fixes till it be satisfied, or the fountain cease dropping : so should we in meditation reject such materials as are barren like the tops of hills, and fix upon such thoughts which nourish and refresh, and there dwell till the nourishment be drawn forth, or so much of it as we can then temperately digest.

14. Fifthly, In meditation strive rather for graces than for gifts, for affections in the way of virtue more than the overflowings of sensible devotion : and therefore, if thou findest any thing by which thou mayest be better, though thy spirit do not actually rejoice or find any gust or relish in the manducation, yet choose it greedily. For, although the chief end of meditation be affection, and not determinations intellectual, yet there is choice to be had of the affections, and care must be taken that the affections be desires of virtue, or repudiations and aversions from something criminal ; not joys and transportations spiritual, comforts and complacencies, for they are no part of our duty. Sometimes they are encouragements, and sometimes rewards : sometimes they depend upon habitude and disposition of body, and seem great matters when they have little in them, and are more bodily than spiritual, like the gift of

tears, and yearning of the bowels; and soon they are illusions and temptations, at which soul stoops and be greedy after, they may like Hippomenes's golden apples to Atalanta, retard our course, and possibly do some harm to the whole race. And this will be nearer to practice, if we consider the variety of which is fitted to the meditation in several men travelling towards heaven.

15. For the first beginners in religion employed in the mastering of their first apostasy, casting out their devils, exterminating all errors, lessening the proclivity of habits, and commanding the too great forwardness of vicinations: and this, which divines call the purgative way, is wholly spent in actions of repentance, mortification, and self-denial. And therefore a penitent person snatches at comforts, or thoughts of sensible devotion, his repentance is too dry, it is but a rod of roses and jessamine. It sees the spirit broken all in pieces, and needs a little of the oil of gladness for its use, and restitution to the capacities of its duty, give it: but this is not to be designed, nor ended at in the meditation. Tears of joy are not expressions nor instruments of repentance, must not gather grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles: no refreshments to be looked for, but such only as are necessary for support, when God sees they are, let not us trouble ourselves, he will provide them. But the meditations which are prompt to this purgative way and practice of first beginners are not apt to produce capacities, but in the sequel and consequence. 'Afterwards it brings forth the pleasant

hatefulness,' but 'for the present it hath no joy in it;' no joy of sense, though much satisfaction to the soul. And such are meditations of the fall of angels and man, the ejection of them from heaven, our parents from Paradise, the horror and obliquity of sin, the wrath of God, the severity of his anger, mortification of our body and spirit, self-denial, the cross of Christ, death, and hell, and judgment, the terrors of an evil conscience, the iniquities of a sinner, the unreasonableness of sin, the troubles of repentance, the worm and sting of a burdened spirit, the difficulties of rooting out evil habits, and the utter abolition of sin. If these titles bear honey, we may fill ourselves; but such sweetnesss spoil the operations of these bitter potions. Here therefore let your addresses to God and your mental prayers be affectionate desires of pardon, humble considerations of ourselves, thoughts of revenge against our crimes, designs of mortification, indefatigable solicitations for mercy, pressures of shame and confusion of face: and he meditates best in the purgative way, that makes these affections most operative and high.

16. After our first step is taken, and the punitive part of repentance is resolved on, and begun, and put forward into good degrees of progress, we may enter into the illuminative way of religion, and set upon the acquirement of virtues, and the pursuit of spiritual graces; and therefore our meditations are to be proportioned to the design of that employment: such as are considerations of the life of Jesus, examples of saints, reasons of virtue, means of acquiring them, designations of proper exercises to every pious habit, the eight beatitudes, the gifts and fruits of the Holy Ghost, the

promises of the gospel, the attributes of God as they are revealed to represent God to be infinite, and to make us religious, the rewards of heaven, excellent and select sentences of holy persons, to be as incentives to piety. These are the proper matter for proficients in religion. But then the affections producible from these are love of virtue, desires to imitate the holy Jesus, affections to saints and holy persons, conformity of choice, subordination to God's will, election of the ways of virtue, satisfaction of understanding in the ways of religion, and resolutions to pursue them in the midst of all discomforts and persecutions: and our mental prayers or intercourse with God, which are the present emanations of our meditations, must be in order to these affections and productions from those. And in all these yet there is safety and piety, and no seeking of ourselves, but designs of virtue in just reason and duty to God, and for his sake, that is, for his commandment. And in all these particulars, if there be such a sterility of spirit that there be no end served but of spiritual profit, we are never the worse: all that God requires of us is, that we will live well, and repent in just measure and right manner; and he that doeth so hath meditated well.

17. From hence if a pious soul passes to affections of greater sublimity, and intimate and more immediate, abstracted, and immaterial love, it is well: only remember that the love God requires of us is an operative, material, and communicative love: 'If ye love me, keep my commandments.' So that still a good life is the effect of the sublimest meditation: and if we can make our duty sure behind us, ascend up as high into the mountain as you can; so your ascent may consist with the securi-

your person, the condition of infirmity, and precepts of your duty. According to the saying of Idefonsus:¹ "Our empty saying of lauds, singing verses in honour of his name, please us so well as the imitation of him does adhere to us; and a devout imitator pleases the better than an idle panegyrist." Let your heart be like his, your duty in imitation of his precept and example, and then sing praises as your heart is large enough, no voice pleasant, no life long enough, nothing but an eternal duration and a beatifical state can do it. And therefore holy David joins them both, "I will offer thee thanks and praise, O Lord; and to him that ordereth his conversation I will show the salvation of God."² All thanksgiving and praise without a right-ordered conversation are but the echo of religion, a voice and no music: but if those praises be sung by a heart devout and obedient, that is 'singing with the heart' and 'singing with understanding,' that is music that God delights in.

Sixthly, But let me observe and press this point. It is a mistake, and not a little dangerous when people religious and forward shall too easily, frequently, and nearly spend their thoughts in consideration of divine excellencies. Hath not God shown thee merit enough to spend all thy stock of love upon him in the characters of his goodness in the book of the creature, the great tables of his mercy, and the lines of his justice: we have enough to praise his excellencies in what we see of him, and are refreshed with his influence,

¹ I. de assumpt. Hierocl.

² Psalm l. 23.

and see his beauties in reflection, though we do not put our eyes out with staring upon his face. To behold the glories and perfections of God with a more direct intuition, is the privilege of angels, who yet cover their faces in the brightness of his presence: it is only permitted to us to consider the back parts of God. And therefore those speculations are too bold and imprudent addresses, and minister to danger more than to religion, when we pass away from the direct studies of virtues, and those thoughts of God which are the freer and safer communications of the Deity, which are the means of intercourse and relation between him and us, to those considerations concerning God which are metaphysical and remote, the formal objects of adoration and wonder, rather than of virtue and temperate discourses. For God in Scripture never revealed any of his abstracted perfections and remoter and mysterious distances, but with a purpose to produce fear in us, and therefore to chide the temerity and boldness of too familiar and nearer intercourse.

19. True it is, that every thing we see or can consider represents some perfections of God: but this I mean, that no man should consider too much and meditate too frequently upon the immediate perfections of God as it were by way of intuition, but as they are manifested in the creatures and in the ministeries of virtue; and also whenever God's perfections be matter of meditation, we should not ascend upwards unto him, but descend upon ourselves, like fruitful vapours drawn up into a cloud descending speedily into a shower; that the effect of the consideration be a design of good life; and that our loves to God be not spent in abstractions, but in good works and humble obedience. The

her kind of love may deceive us; and therefore may such kind of considerations which are its instruments. But this I am now more particularly to consider.

20. For beyond this I have described, there is a degree of meditation so exalted, that it changes the very name, and is called contemplation, and it is the unitive way of religion; that is, it consists in unions and adherences to God. It is a prayer in quietness and silence, and a meditation extraordinary, a discourse without variety, a vision and intuition of divine excellencies, an immediate entry into an orb of light, and a resolution of all our duties into sweetnesses, affections, and starings upon the divine beauty; and is carried on to ecstasies, raptures, suspensions, elevations, abstractions, and apprehensions beatifical. In all the course of virtuous meditation the soul is like a virgin invited to make a matrimonial contract, it requires the condition of the person, his estate and disposition, and other circumstances of amability and desire: but when she is satisfied with these inquiries, and hath chosen her husband, she no more considers particulars, but is moved by his voice and his gesture, and runs to his entertainment and fruition, and spends herself wholly in affections, not to obtain, but enjoy his love.

Thus it is said.

21. But this is a thing not to be discoursed of, but felt. And although in other sciences the terms must first be known, and then the rules and conclusions scientific; here it is otherwise: for first the whole experience of this must be obtained, before we can so much as know what it is; and the end must be acquired first, the conclusion before the premises. They that pretend to these heights

call them the secrets of the kingdom : but they are such which no man can describe ; such which God hath not revealed in the publication of the gospel ; such for the acquiring of which there are no means prescribed, and to which no man is obliged, and which are not in any man's power to obtain ; such which it is not lawful to pray for or desire, and concerning which we shall never be called to account.

22. Indeed when persons have been long softened with the continual droppings of religion, and their spirits made timorous and apt for impression by the assiduity of prayer, and perpetual alarms of death, and the continual dyings of mortification ; the fancy, which is a very great instrument of devotion, is kept continually warm, and in a disposition and aptitude to take fire, and to flame out in great ascents : and when they suffer transportations beyond the burdens and support of reason, they suffer they know not what, and call it what they please ; and other pious people that hear talk of it, admire that devotion which is so eminent and beatified ; (for so they esteem it ;) and so they come to be called raptures and ecstasies, which even amongst the apostles were so seldom, that they were never spoke of. For those visions, raptures of St. Stephen, St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John,¹ were not pretended to be of this kind, not excesses of religion, but prophetic and intuitive revelations to great and significant purposes, such as may be and are described in story ; but these other cannot. For so Cassian reports and commends a saying of Antony the eremite, " That it is not a perfect prayer in which the votary does either understand himself or the prayer ; " mean-

¹ Acts, x. 10, xi. 5 ; Num. xxiv. 4, 16.

, that persons eminently religious were *divina mentes*, as Dionysius Areopagita said of his master Hierotheus, patics in devotion, suffering ravishments of senses, transported beyond the uses of sanity into the suburbs of beatifical apprehensions. But whether or no this be any thing but a too intense and indiscreet pressure of the duties of the soul to inconveniences of understanding, or else a credulous, busy, and untamed fancy, they that think best of it cannot give a certainty. There are and have been some religious who have acted madness, and pretended inspirations; and when these are destitute of a prophetic gift, if they resolve to serve themselves upon the pretences of it, they are disposed to the imitation, if not to the sufferings of madness: and it would be great folly to call such *Dei plenos*, full of God, who are no better than fantastic and mad people.

3. This we are sure of, that many illusions have been in the likeness of visions, and absurd fancies under the pretence of raptures; and what some have called the spirit of prophecy hath been the spirit of lying, and contemplation hath been nothing but melancholy, and unnatural lengths of stillness of prayer hath been a mere dream of hypochondriacal devotion, and hath ended in grief or despair, or some sottish and dangerous distraction. It is reported of Heron the monk, who having lived a retired, mortified, and religious life for many years together, at last he came to that

Μανίας δέ γε εἶδη δύο· ἡ μὲν ὑπὸ νοσημάτων ἀνθρωπίνῃ ἡ δὲ ὑπὸ θείας ἐξαλλαγῆς. Plato in Phædr. &c.—
There are two kinds of madness, the one natural, the other divine.”

habit of austerity or singularity, that he : the festival refection and freer meals of East other solemnities, that he might do more emi than the rest, and spend his time in greater al tions and contemplations. But the devil, advantage of the weakness of his melanchol unsettled spirit, gave him a transportation a ecstasy in which he fancied himself to have at so great perfection, that he was dear to God crowned martyr, and angels would be his se for indemnity, though he threw himself to the b of a well. He obeyed his fancy and tempt did so, bruised himself to death, and died sessed with a persuasion of the verity of that e and transportation.

24. I will not say that all violences and ex gancies of a religious fancy are illusions ; say that they are all unnatural, not hallow the warrant of a revelation, nothing reasonable thing secure. I am not sure that they ever c with humility ; but it is confessed that the often produced by self-love, arrogancy, and the opinion others have of us. I will not judg condition of those persons who are said to suffered these extraordinaries, for I know no circumstances, or causes, or attendants, or effects, or whether the stories be true that ma port of them : but I should only advise, th follow the intimation of our blessed Saviour ‘ we sit down in the lowest place, till the mas the feast comes and bids us sit up higher.’ entertain the inward man in the purgative illuminative way, that is, in actions of repent virtue and precise duty, that is the surest w uniting us to God, whilst it is done by faith

obedience; and that also is love: and in these peace and safety dwell. And after we have done our work, it is not discretion in a servant to hasten to his meal, and snatch at the refreshment of visions, unions, and abstractions; but first we must find ourselves, and wait upon the master, and not sit down ourselves, till we all be called to the great supper of the Lamb.

25. It was therefore an excellent desire of St. Bernard, who was as likely as any to have such altitudes of speculation, if God had really dispensed them to persons holy, fantastic, and religious: "I pray God grant me peace of spirit, joy in the Holy Ghost, to compassionate others in the midst of my mirth, to be charitable in simplicity, to rejoice with them that rejoice, and to mourn with them that mourn; and with these I shall be content. Other exaltations of devotion I leave to apostles and apostolic men: the high hills are for the harts and climbing goats, the stony rocks and the recesses of the earth for the conies." It is more healthful and nutritive to dig the earth and to eat of her fruits, than to stare upon the greatest glories of the heavens, and live upon the beams of the sun. So unsatisfying a thing is rapture and transportation to the soul; it often distracts the faculties, but seldom does advantage piety, and is full of danger in the greatest of its lustre. If ever a man be more in love with God by such instruments, or more endeared to virtue, or made more severe and watchful in his repentance, it is an excellent grace and gift of God: but then this is nothing but the joys and comfort of ordinary meditation. Those extraordinary, as they have no sense in them, so are not pretended to be instruments of

virtue, but are like Jonathan's arrows, shot by it, to signify the danger the man is in to whom such arrows are shot: but if the person made unquiet, unconstant, proud, pusillanimous of high opinion, pertinacious and confident in certain judgments, or desperate, it is certain these are temptations and illusions. So that, as all duty consists in the ways of repentance, and acquisition of virtue, so there rests all our safety, and by consequence all our solid joys: and this is the end of ordinary, pious, and regular meditations.

26. If I mistake not, there is a temptation to this under another name, amongst persons who in religion hath less discourse and more fancy; that is a familiarity with God: which, indeed, were rightly understood, is an affection consequent to the illuminative way, that is, an act or an effect of the virtue of religion and devotion, which consists in prayers and addresses to God, lauds, eucharists and hymns and confidence of coming to the throne of grace, upon assurance of God's mercy and goodness infinite. So that familiarity with God, which is an affection of friendship, the intercourse of giving and receiving blessings and graces respectively; and it is produced by a holy life, or the being in the state of grace, and is a part of every man's inheritance that is a friend to God. But when familiarity with God shall be esteemed a privilege of singular and eminent persons, not communicated to all the faithful, and is thought to be an admission to a nearer intercourse and secrecy with God, it is an effect of pride, a mistake in judgment concerning the very thing which the old divines call the unitive way, and themselves that claim it understood the

of art, and the consequents of their own intentions.

27. Only I shall observe one circumstance; that familiarity with God is nothing else but an admission to be of God's family, the admission of a servant or a son in minority, and implies obedience, duty, and fear on our parts; care and providence and love on God's part. And it is not the familiarity of sons, but the impudence of proud equals, to express this pretended privilege in even, unmannerly, and unreverent addresses and discourses. And it is a sure rule, that whatsoever heights of piety, union or familiarity any man pretends to, it is of the devil, unless the greater the pretence be, the greater also be the humility of the man. The highest flames are the most tremulous; and so are the most holy and eminently religious persons more full of awfulness and fear, and modesty and humility. So that in true divinity and right speaking there is no such thing as the unitive way of religion, save only in the effects of duty, obedience, and the expresses of the precise virtue of religion. Meditations in order to a good life, let them be as exalted as the capacity of the person and subject will endure, up to the height of contemplation: but if contemplation comes to be a distinct thing, and something besides or beyond a distinct degree of virtuous meditation, it is lost to all sense, and religion, and prudence. 'Let no man be hasty to eat of the fruits of paradise before his time.'

28. And now I shall not need to enumerate the blessed fruits of holy meditation; for it is a grace that is instrumental to all effects, to the production of all virtues, and the extinction of all vices; and

by consequence, the inhabitation of the Holy Ghost within us is the natural or proper emanation from the frequent exercise of this duty: only it hath something particularly excellent, besides its general influence. For meditation is that part of prayer which knits the soul to its right object, and confirms and makes actual our intention and devotion. Meditation is the tongue of the soul, and the language of our spirit; and our wandering thoughts in prayer are but the neglects of meditation, and recessions from that duty; and according as we neglect meditation, so are our prayers imperfect, meditation being the soul of prayer, and the intention of our spirit. But in all other things meditation is the instrument and conveyance: it habituates our affections to heaven; it hath permanent content; it produces constancy of purpose, despising of things below, inflamed desires of virtue, love of God, self-denial, humility of understanding, and universal correction of our life and manners.

THE PRAYER.

Holy and eternal Jesus, whose whole life and doctrine was a perpetual sermon of holy life, a treasure of wisdom, and a repository of divine materials for meditation, give me grace to understand, diligence and attention to consider, care to lay up, and carefulness to reduce to practice all those actions, discourses, and pious lessons and intimations by which thou didst expressly teach, or tacitly imply, or mysteriously signify our duty. Let my understanding become as spiritual in its employment and purposes as it is immaterial in its nature: fill my memory, as a vessel of election, with remembrances and notions highly compunctive, and greatly incentive of all the parts of sanctity. Let thy Holy Spirit dwell in my soul, instructing my knowledge,

ing my thoughts, guiding my affections, directing my the choice of virtue; that it may be the great employment of my life to meditate in thy law, to study thy perceptive understand even the niceties and circumstantialia of my that ignorance may neither occasion a sin, nor become a nent. Take from me all vanity of spirit, lightness of curiosity and impertinency of enquiry, illusions of the and fantastic deceptions. Let my thoughts be as my religion, honest, pious, simple, prudent, and charitable, of employment and force to the production of virtues, and extinction of vice; but suffering no transportations of sense and nothing greater than the capacities of my soul, nothing to minister to any intemperances of spirit: but let me be inebriated with love, and that love wholly spent in doing thy will as best please thee in the conditions of my infirmity, in securities of humility, till thou shalt please to draw the veil, and reveal thy interior beauties in the kingdom of thine glories; which grant for thy mercy's sake, O holy and Jesu. Amen.

SECTION VI.

Of the Death of the holy Innocents, or the Babes of Bethlehem, and the Flight of Jesus into Egypt.

1. ALL this while Herod waited for the return of the wise men, that they might give directions where the child did lie, and his sword might find him out with a certain and direct execution. But 'when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, he was exceeding wroth.' For it now began to deserve his trouble, when his purposes which were most secret began to be contradicted and diverted with a prevention, as if they were resisted by an all-seeing and almighty Providence. He began to suspect the hand of heaven was in it, and saw there was nothing for his purposes to be acted, unless he could dissolve the golden chain of predestination. Herod believed the divine oracles, foretelling that a King should be born in Bethlehem; and yet his ambition had made him so stupid, that he attempted to cancel the decree of heaven. For if he did not believe the prophecies, why was he troubled? if he did believe them, how could he possibly hinder that event which God had foretold himself would certainly bring to pass?

2. And therefore, since God already had hindered him from the executions of a distinguishing sword, he resolved to send a sword of indiscrimination and confusion, hoping that if he killed all the babes of Bethlehem, this young king's reign also should soon determine. 'He therefore sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem and all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, ac-

ording to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.' For this execution was in the beginning of the second year after Christ's nativity,¹ as in all probability we guess; not at the two years' end, as some suppose: because as his malice was subtle, so he intended it should be secure; and though he had been diligent in his enquiry, and was near the time in his computation, yet he that was never sparing of the lives of others, would now, to secure his kingdom, rather overact his severity for some months, than by doing execution but just to the tittle of his account, hazard the escaping of the Messias.

3. This execution was sad, cruel, and universal: no abatements made for the dire shriekings of the mothers; no tender-hearted soldier was employed; no hard-hearted person was softened by the weeping eyes and pity-begging looks of those mothers, that wondered how it was possible any person should hurt their pretty sucklings: no connivances there, no protections, or friendships, or consideration, or indulgences; but Herod caused that his own child, which was at nurse in the coasts of Bethlehem, should bleed to death; which made Augustus Cæsar to say, that "in Herod's house it were better to be a hog than a child;"² because the custom of the nation did secure a hog from Herod's knife, but no religion could secure his child. The sword being thus made sharp by Herod's commission, killed fourteen thousand pretty babes, as the Greeks

¹ Sic ait glossa ordinaria: sed Onuphrius in Fastis ait hanc eadem biennio post Christum natum contigisse.—"So says the common gloss on this passage: but Onuphirus says that the slaughter took place in the second year of Christ."

² Macrob. Saturnal. lib. ii. cap. 4.

in their calendar, and the Abyssines of Ethiopia commemorate in their offices of liturgy. Herod, crafty and malicious, that is, perfect rant,¹ had caused all the children to be gathered together: which the credulous mothers (supposing it had been to take account of their age and number, in order to some taxing) hindered not, but wittingly suffered themselves and their babes to be betrayed to an irremediable butchery.

4. 'Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning; Rachel weeping her children, and would not be comforted.' the synonymas of sadness were little enough to express this great weeping, when fourteen thousand mothers in one day saw their pretty babes pour forth their blood into that bosom whence not before they had sucked milk; and instead of their pretty smiles which used to entertain the fancy and dear affections of their mothers, nothing but frighting shrieks, and then ghastly looks. Mourning was great, like 'the mourning in the valley of Hinnom, and there was no comfort for their sorrow was too big to be cured, till it should lie down alone, and rest with its own weariness.'

5. But the malice of Herod went also into the hill-country, and hearing that of John the son of Zachary great things were spoken, by which he was designed to a great ministry about this young prince, he attempted in him also to rescind the prophecies, and sent a messenger of death towards him. But the mother's care had been early for him, and sent him into desert places, where he could

¹ Qualis apud Lucianum describitur tyrannus. 'Ἐκείνος ὁ τὴν φρενὴν κρατύνων, &c.

ned 'till the time appointed of his manifestation to Israel.' But as the children of Bethlehem did in the place of Christ, so did the father of the priest die for his child. For Herod slew Zachary between the temple and the altar,¹ because he refused to betray his son to the fury of that rabid Jew. Though some persons very eminent among the stars of the primitive church report a tradition, that a place being separated in the temple for virgins, Zachary suffered the mother of our Lord to abide there after the birth of her holy Son, affirming her still to be a virgin; and that for this reason, not Herod, but the Scribes and Pharisees did kill Zachary.²

6. Tertullian reports, that the blood of Zachary did so besmeared the stones of the pavement, which was the altar on which the good old priest was sacrificed, that no art or industry could wash the tincture out, the dye and guilt being both indelible;³ as if, because God did intend to exact of that nation 'all the blood of righteous persons from Abel to Zacharias,' who was the last of the martyrs of the synagogue, he would leave a character of their guilt in their eyes to upbraid their irreligion, uncleanness, and infidelity. Some there are who affirm these words of our blessed Saviour not to relate to Zachary who had been already slain; but to be a prophecy of the last of all the martyrs of the Jews, who should be slain immediately before the destruction of the last temple, and the dissolution

¹ Sic Chrysost. et Petrus Martyr Episc. Alexand. Niceph. et Adrianus.

² Sic aiunt Origen. tract. 23, in Evang. Matth. 8. Basil. de Humana Christi generatione, Nyssen. in Natali Christi, Phil. adv. Anthropomorphitas.

³ In Scorpiaco, cap. 8.

of the nation. Certain it is, that such a Zachary, the son of Baruch,)if we may believe Josephus,¹) was slain in the middle of the temple, a little before it was destroyed : and it is agreeable to the nature of the prophecy and reproof here made by our blessed Saviour, that from Abel to Zachary should take in 'all the righteous blood' from first to last, till the iniquity was complete ; and it is not imaginable that the blood of our blessed Lord and of St. James their bishop (for whose death many of themselves thought God destroyed their city) should be left out of the account, which yet would certainly be left out, if any other Zachary should be meant than he whom they last slew. And in proportion to this Cyprian de Valera expounds that which we read in the past tense to signify the future, 'ye slew,' i. e. shall slay ; according to the style often used by prophets, and as the aorist of an uncertain signification will bear. But the first great instance of the divine vengeance for these executions was upon Herod, who in very few years after was smitten of God with so many plagues and tortures, that himself alone seemed like an hospital of the *incurabili*. For he was tormented with a soft slow fire, like that of burning iron or the cinders of yew, in his body ; in his bowels with intolerable colics and ulcers ; in his natural parts with worms ; in his feet with gout ; in his nerves with convulsions ; difficulty of breathing ; and out of divers parts of his body issued out so impure, and ulcerous a steam, that the loathsomeness, pain, and indignation made him once to snatch a knife with purpose to have killed himself, but that he was pre-

¹ Lib. v. de Bello, cap. 1.

ented by a nephew of his that stood there in his attendance.

7. But as the flesh of beasts grows callous by stripes and the pressure of the yoke, so did the heart of Herod by the loads of divine vengeance. God began his hell here; and the pains of hell never made any man less impious. For Herod perceiving that he must now die,¹ first put to death his son Antipater, under pretence that he would have poisoned him: and that the last scene of his life might, for pure malice and exalted spite, outdo all the rest, because he believed the Jewish nation would rejoice at his death, he assembled all the nobles of the people, and put them in prison, giving in charge to his sister Salome, that when he was expiring his last, all the nobility should be slain, that his death might be lamented with a perfect and universal sorrow.

8. But God, that brings to nought the counsels of wicked princes, turned the design against the indictment of Herod: for when he was dead, and could not call his sister to account for disobeying his most bloody and unrighteous commands, she released all the imprisoned and despairing gentlemen, and made the day of her brother's death a perfect jubilee, a day of joy, such as was that when the nation was delivered from the violence of Haman in the days of Purim.

9. And all this while God had provided a sanctuary for the holy child Jesus. For God, seeing the secret purposes of blood which Herod had, sent his angel, who appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mo-

¹ Δεινὰ γὰρ ἔκ κοῖται ἀποικοιμένοις λέοντος.

ther, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. Then he arose, and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt.¹ And they made their first abode in Hermopolis in the country of Thebais:² whither when they first arrived, the child Jesus being by design or providence carried into a temple, all the statues of the idol-gods fell down, like Dagon at the presence of the ark, and suffered their timely and just dissolution and dishonour; according to the prophecy of Isaiab, 'Behold, the Lord shall come into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence.'³ And in the life of the prophet Jeremy, written by Epiphanius, it is reported, "That he told the Egyptian priests, that then their idols should be broken in pieces, when a holy virgin with her child should enter into their country." Which prophecy possibly might be the cause that the Egyptians did, besides their vanities, worship also an infant in a manger, and a virgin in her bed.

10. From Hermopolis to Maturea went these holy pilgrims in pursuance of their safety and provisions, where it was reported they dwelt in a garden of balsam, till Joseph being at the end of seven years (as it is commonly belived) ascertained by an angel of the death of Herod, and commanded to return to the land of Israel, he was obedient to the heavenly vision, and returned. But hearing that Archelaus did reign in the place of his father, and

¹ Matth. ii. 13.

² Euseb. de Demonstr. c. xx. S. Athanas. lib. de Incarnat. Verbi. Palladius in Vita Apollon.

³ Isa. xix. 1. Dorotheus in Synopsi, Pallad. in Vita Apollon.

owing that the cruelty and ambition of Herod was hereditary or entailed upon Archelaus, being warned to turn aside into the parts of Galilee, which was of a distinct jurisdiction, governed indeed by one of Herod's sons, but not by Archelaus,) thither he diverted, and there that holy family remained in the city of Nazareth; whence the holy child had the appellation of a Nazarene.

AD. SECTION VI.

Considerations upon the Death of the Innocents, and the Flight of the Holy Jesus into Egypt.

HEROD having called the wise men, and received information of their design, and the circumstances of the child, pretended religion too, and desired them to bring him word when they had found the babe, that he might come and worship him: meaning to make a sacrifice of him, to whom he should pay his adoration; and instead of investing the young prince with a royal purple, he would have stained his swaddling-bands with his blood. As ever dangerous when a wicked prince pretends religion; his design is then foulest, by how much it tends to put on a fairer outside; but it was an early policy in the world, and it concerned men's interest to seem religious, when they thought that to do so was an abatement of great designs. When Nebel designed the robbing and destroying Nah, she sent to the elders to proclaim a fast. For external and visible remonstrances of religion give in the spirits of men a great reputation of the doing person; and therefore they will not rush

into a furious sentence against his actions, at least not judge them with prejudice against the man towards whom they are so fairly prepared; but do some violence to their own understanding, and either disbelieve their own reason, or excuse the fact, or think it but an error, or a less crime, or the incidences of humanity; or however, are so long in decreeing against him, whom they think to be religious, that the rumour is abated, or the stream of indignation is diverted by other laborious arts intervening before our zeal is kindled; and so the person is unjudged, or at least the design secured.

2. But in this, human policy was exceedingly infatuated. And though Herod had trusted his design to no keeper but himself, and had pretended fair, having religion for the word, and called the wise men privately, and instructed them with no employment but a civil request, an account of the success of their journey, which they had no reason or desire to conceal; yet his heart was opened to the eye of heaven, and the sun was not more visible than his dark purpose was to God, and it succeeded accordingly; the child was sent away, the wise men warned not to return, Herod was mocked and enraged; and so his craft became foolish and vain. And so are all counsels intended against God, or any thing of which he himself hath undertaken the protection. For although we understand not the reasons of security, because we see not that admirable concentrating of infinite things in the divine providence, whereby God brings his purposes to act by ways unlooked for, and sometimes contradictory; yet the public and perpetual experience of the world hath given continual demonstrations, that all evil counsels have come to nought; that the suc-

ceeding of an impious design is no argument that the man is prosperous; that the curse is then surest, when his fortune spreads the largest; that the contradiction and impossibilities of deliverance to pious persons are but an opportunity and engagement for God to do wonders, and to glorify his power, and to exalt his mercy, by the instances of miraculous or extraordinary events. And as the afflictions happening to good men are alleviated by the support of God's good Spirit, and enduring them here are but consignations to an honourable amends hereafter; so the succeeding prosperities of fortunate impiety, when they meet with punishment in the next or in the third age, or in the deletion of a people five ages after, are the greatest arguments of God's providence, who keeps wrath in store, and forgets not to do judgment for all them that are oppressed with wrong. It was laid up with God, and was perpetually in his eye, being the matter of a lasting, durable and unremitted anger.

3. But God had care of the holy child; he sent his angel to warn Joseph with the babe and his mother to fly into Egypt. Joseph and Mary instantly arise, and without enquiry how they shall live there, or when they shall return, or how be secured, or what accommodations they shall have in their journey, at the same hour of the night begin the pilgrimage with the cheerfulness of obedience, and the securities of faith, and the confidence of hope, and the joys of love; knowing themselves to be recompensed for all the trouble they could endure, that they were instruments of the safety of the holy Jesus, that they then were serving God, that they were encircled with the securities of the divine providence; and in these dispositions all places were,

alike : for every region was a paradise where they were in company with Jesus. And indeed that man wants many degrees of faith and prudence, who is solicitous for the support of his necessities, when he is doing the commandment of God.¹ If he commands thee to offer a sacrifice, himself will provide a lamb, or enable thee to find out one; and he would remove thee into a state of separation, where thy body needs no supplies of provision, if he meant thou shouldst serve him without provisions. He will certainly take away thy need, or satisfy it : he will feed thee himself, as he did the Israelites ; or take away thy hunger, as he did to Moses ; or send ravens to feed thee, as he did to Elias ; or make charitable people minister to thee, as the widow to Elisha ; or give thee his own portion, as he maintained the Levites ; or make thine enemies to pity thee, as the Assyrians did the captive Jews. For whatsoever the world hath, and whatsoever can be conveyed by wonder or by Providence, all that is thy security for provisions, so long as thou doest the work of God. And remember that the assurance of blessing and health and salvation is not made by doing what we list, or being where we desire ; but by doing God's will, and being in the place of his appointment. We may be safe in Egypt, if we be there in obedience to God ; and we may perish among the babes of Bethlehem, if we be there by our own election.

4. Joseph and Mary did not argue against the angel's message, because they had a confidence of their charge, who with the breath of his mouth could have destroyed Herod, though he had been

¹ — Τὸς θεὸς ἔχων τις ἀν φίλος, ἀρίστην μαντικὴν ἔχει δόμοις. Eurip. Helenâ. Heb. xiii. 5, 6.

abetted with all the legions marching under the Roman eagles; but they, like the two cherubims about the propitiatory, took the child between them, and fled, giving way to the fury of persecution, which possibly, when the materials were withdrawn, might expire, and die like fire, which else would rage for ever. Jesus fled, undertook a sad journey, in which the roughness of the ways, his own tenderness, the youth of his mother, the old age of his supposed father, the smallness of their *viaticum* and accommodation for their voyage, the no-kindred they were to go to, hopeless of comforts and exterior supplies, were so many circumstances of poverty, and lesser strokes of the persecution: things that himself did choose, to remonstrate the verity of his nature, the infirmity of his person, the humility of his spirit, the austerity of his understanding, the burden of his charge; and by which he did teach us the same virtues he then expressed, and also consigned this permission to all his disciples in future ages, that they also may fly from their persecutors, when the case is so that their work is not done; that is, they may glorify God with their lives more than with their death. And of this they are ascertained by the arguments of prudent account. For sometimes we are called to glorify God by dying, and the interest of the church and the faith of many may be concerned in it: then we must abide by it. In other cases, it is true, that Demosthenes said in apology for his own escaping from a lost field, "A man that runs away may fight again."¹ And St. Paul made use of a guard of soldiers to rescue him from the treach-

¹ Ἀνὴρ ὁ φεύγων καὶ πάλιν μαχήσεται.

ery of the Jewish rulers, and of a basket to escape from the inquisition of the governor of Damascus, and the primitive Christians, of grotts and subterraneous retirements, and St. Athanasius, of a fair lady's house, and others, of deserts and graves; as knowing it was no shame to fly, when their master had fled, that his time and his work might be fulfilled: and when it was, he then laid his life down.

5. It is hard to set down particular rules that may indefinitely guide all persons in the stating of their own case; because all things that depend upon circumstances are alterable unto infinite. But as God's glory and the good of the church are the great considerations to be carried before us all the way, and in proportions to them we are to determine and judge our questions; so also our infirmities are allowable in the scrutiny. For I doubt not but God intended it a mercy and a compliance with human weakness, when he gave us this permission; as well as it was a design to secure the opportunities of his service, and the consummation of his own work by us. And since our fears, and the incommodities of flight, and the sadness of exile, and the insecurities and inconveniencies of a strange and new abode, are part of the persecution; provided that God's glory be not certainly and apparently neglected, nor the church evidently scandalized by our flight, all interpretations of the question in favour of ourselves, and the declension of that part which may tempt us to apostacy, or hazard our confidence, and the choosing the lesser part of the persecution, is not against the rule of faith, and always hath in it less glory, but oftentimes more security.

6. But thus far Herod's ambition transported him, even to resolutions of murder of the highest person, the most glorious and most innocent upon earth: and it represents that passion to be the most troublesome and vexatious thing that can afflict the sons of men. Virtue hath not half so much trouble in it: it sleeps quietly, without startings and affrighting fancies, it looks cheerfully, smiles with much serenity, and though it laughs not often, yet it is ever delightful in the apprehensions of some faculty; it fears no man, nor no thing, nor is it discomposed, and hath no concernments in the great alterations of the world, and entertains death like a friend, and reckons the issues of it as the greatest of its hopes. But ambition is full of disactions, it teems with stratagems, as Rebecca with struggling twins, and is swelled with expectation as with a tympany, and sleeps sometimes like the wind in a storm, still and quiet for a minute, that it may burst out into an impetuous blast, till the cordage of his heart-strings crack; it fears when none is nigh, and prevents things which it never had intention, and falls under the inevitability of such accidents which either could not be foreseen, or not prevented. It is an infinite labour to make a man's self miserable, and the utmost acquist is so goodly a purchase, that he makes his days full of sorrow, to enjoy the troubles of a three years' reign: for Herod lived but three years, or five at the most, after the flight of Jesus into Egypt. And therefore there is no greater unreasonableness in the world, than in the designs of ambition: for it makes the present certainly miserable, unsatisfied, troublesome, and discontented, for the uncertain acquist of an honour which nothing can secure;

and besides a thousand possibilities of miscarrying, it relies upon no greater certainty than our life; and when we are dead, all the world sees who was the fool. But it is a strange caitiveness and baseness of disposition of men so furiously and unsatiably to run after perishing and uncertain interests, in defiance of all the reason and religion of the world; and yet to have no appetite to such excellencies which satisfy reason, and content the spirit, and create great hopes, and ennoble our expectation, and are advantages to communities of men and public societies, and which all wise men teach, and all religion commands.

7. And it is not amiss to observe how Herod vexed himself extremely upon a mistake.¹ The child Jesus was born a King, but it was a King of all the world; not confined within the limits of a province, like the weaker beauties of a torch, to shine in one room, but, like the sun, his empire was over all the world: and if Herod would have become but his tributary,² and paid him the acknowledgments of his Lord, he should have had better conditions than under Cæsar, and yet have been as absolute in his own Jewry as he was before. His kingdom was not of this world; and he that gives heavenly kingdoms to all his servants, would not have stooped to have taken up Herod's petty coronet.³ But as it is a very vanity which ambition

¹ *Dubia pro certis solent timere reges. Seneca Oedip.*

² *Hostis Herodes impie
Christum venire quid times?
Non auferet terrestria,
Qui regna dat cœlestia.*

³ *Qui sceptrâ duro sævus imperio regit,
Timet timentes, metus in authorem cadit.*

Senec. Oedip.

weeks, so it is a shadow that disturbs and discomposes all its motions and apprehensions.

8. And the same mistake caused calamities to descend upon the church; for some of the persecutions commenced upon pretence Christianity was an enemy to government. But the pretence was infinitely unreasonable, and therefore had the state of senseless allegations, it disbanded presently: for no external accident did so incorporate the excellency of Christ's religion into the hearts of men, as the innocency of the men, their inoffensive deportment, the modesty of their designs, their great humility and obedience, a life expressly in enmity and contestation against secular ambition. And it is to be feared, that the mingling human interests with religion will deface the image Christ hath stamped upon it. Certain it is, the metal is much debased by so impure allay, while the Christian prince serves his end of ambition, and bears arms upon his neighbour's country for the service of religion, making Christ's kingdom to invade Heod's rights: and in the state ecclesiastical, secular interests have so deep a portion, that there are snares laid to tempt a persecution, and men are invited to sacrilege, while the revenues of a church are a fair fortune for a prince. I make no scruple to find fault with painters that picture the poor saints with rich garments; for though they deserved better, yet they had but poor ones: and some have been tempted to cheat the saint, not out of ill-will to his sanctity, but love to his shrine, and to the beauty of the clothes with which some imprudent persons have of old time dressed their images. So it is in the fate of the church: persecution and the robes of Christ were her portion

and her clothing; and when she is dressed up in gaudy fortunes, it is no more than she deserves; but yet sometimes it is occasion that the devil cheats her of her holiness, and the men of the world sacrilegiously cheat her of her riches: and then, when God hath reduced her to that poverty he first promised and intended to her, the persecution ceases and sanctity returns, and God curses the sacrilege, and stirs up men's minds to religious donatives; and all is well till she grows rich again. And if it be dangerous in any man to be rich, and discomposes his steps in his journey to eternity; it is not then so proportionable to the analogy of Christ's poverty, and the inheritance of the church, and to be sedulous in acquiring great temporalities, putting princes in jealousy, and the states into care for securities, lest all the temporal should run into ecclesiastical possession.

9. If the church have, by the active piety of a credulous, a pious, and less observant age, been endowed with great possessions, she hath rules enough, and poor enough, and necessitous enough, to dispend what she hath with advantages to religion: but then all she gets by it, is the trouble of an unthankful, a suspected, and unsatisfied dispensation; and the church is made by evil persons a scene of ambition and stratagem; and to get a German bishopric is to be a prince; and to defend with niceness and suits of law every custom or lesser rite, even to the breach of charity and the scandal of religion, is called a duty.¹ And every single person is bound to forgive injuries, and to quit his right, rather than his

¹ Vide quæ dixit Ammian. Marcel. lib. xvii. et Epistolæ S. Gregorii M. lib. iv. ep. 32, 34, 36, et lib. vi. ep. 30. lib. vii. indict. I. ep. 30, et Concil. Africanum.

charity : but if it is not a duty in the church also, in them whose life should be excellent to the degree of example, I would fain know if there be not greater care taken to secure the ecclesiastical revenue, than the public charity and the honour of religion in the strict piety of the clergy : for as the not engaging in suits may occasion bold people to wrong the church, so the necessity of engaging is occasion of losing charity, and of great scandal. I find not fault with a free revenue of the church ; it is in some sense necessary to governors, and to preserve the consequents of their authority : but I represent that such things are occasion of much mischief to the church and less holiness ; and in all cases respect should be had to the design of Christianity, to the prophecies of Jesus, to the promised lot of the church, to the dangers of riches, to the excellencies and advantages and rewards of poverty : and if the church have enough to perform all her duties and obligations cheerfully, let her of all societies be soonest content. If she have plenty, let her use it temperately and charitably : if she have not, let her not be querulous and troublesome. But however it would be thought upon, that though in judging the *quantum* of the church's portion the world thinks every thing too much, yet we must be careful we do not judge every thing too little : and if our fortune be safe between envy and contempt, it is much mercy. If it be despicable, it is safe for ecclesiastics, though it may be accidentally inconvenient or less profitable to others ; but if it be great, public experience hath made remonstrance that it mingles with the world, and dirties those fingers which are in-

strumental in consecration and the more solemn rites of Christianity.

10. Jesus fled from the persecution : as he did not stand it out, so he did not stand out against it. He was careful to transmit no precedent or encouragement of resisting tyrannous princes, when they offer violence to religion and our lives. He would not stand disputing for privileges, nor calling in auxiliaries from the Lord of Hosts, who could have spared him many legions of angels, every single spirit being able to have defeated all Herod's power. But he knew it was a hard lesson to learn patience ; and all the excuses in the world would be sought out to discourage such a doctrine, by which we are taught to die, or lose all we have, or suffer inconveniences at the will of a tyrant. We need no authentic examples, much less doctrines, to invite men to war, from which we see Christian princes cannot be restrained with the engagements and peaceful theorems of an excellent and a holy religion ; nor subjects kept from rebelling by the interests of all religions in the world, nor by the necessities and reasonableness of obedience, nor the endearments of all public societies of men. One word or an intimation from Christ would have sounded an alarm, and put us into postures of defence ; when all Christ's excellent sermons and rare exemplary actions cannot tie our hands. But it is strange now, that of all men in the world, Christians should be such fighting people, or that Christian subjects should lift up a thought against a Christian prince, when they had no intimation of encouragement from their Master, but many from him to endear obedience, and humility, and

patience, and charity : and these four make up the whole analogy, and represent the chief design and meaning of Christianity in its moral constitution.

11. But Jesus, when himself was safe, could also have secured the poor babes of Bethlehem, with thousands of diversions and avocations of Herod's purposes, or by discovering his own escape, in some safe manner not unknown to the divine wisdom : but yet it did not so please God. He is Lord of his creatures, and hath absolute dominion over our lives ; and he had an end of glory to serve upon these babes, and an end of justice upon Herod. And to the children he made such compensation that they had no reason to complain that they were so soon made stars, when they shined in their little orbs and participations of eternity. For so the sense of the church hath been, that they having died the death of martyrs, though incapable of making the choice, God supplies the defects of their will by his own entertainment of the thing ; but as the misery and their death, so also their glorification might have the same author in the same manner of causality, even by a peremptory and unconditioned determination in these particulars. This sense is pious, and nothing unreasonable, considering that all circumstances of the thing make the case particular. But the immature death of other infants is a sadder story : for though I have no warrant or thought that it is ill with them after death, and in what manner or degree of well-being it is there is no revelation ; yet I am not of opinion, that the securing of so low a condition as theirs in all reason is like to be, will make recompence, or is an equal blessing with the possibilities of such an eternity as is proposed to

them, who in the use of reason and an holy life glorify God with a free obedience. And if it were otherwise, it were no blessing to live till the use of reason; and fools and babes were in the best, because in the securest condition, and certain expectation of equal glories.

12. As soon as Herod was dead, (for the divine vengeance waited his own time for his arrest,) the angel presently brought Joseph word. The holy family was full of content and indifferency, not solicitous for return, not distrustful of the divine providence, full of poverty, and sanctity, and content, waiting God's time, at the return of which God delayed not to recall them from exile. Out of Egypt he called his Son; and directed Joseph's fear and course, that he should divert to a place in the jurisdiction of Philip, where the heir of Herod's cruelty, Archelaus, had nothing to do. And this very series of providence and care God expresses to all his sons by adoption; and will determine the time, and set bounds to every persecution, and punish the instruments, and ease our pains, and refresh our sorrows, and give quietness to our fears, and deliverance from our troubles, and sanctify it all, and give a crown at last, and all in his good time, if we wait the coming of the angel, and in the meantime do our duty with care, and sustain our temporals with indifferency. And in all our troubles and displeasing accidents we may call to mind, that God by his holy and most reasonable providence hath so ordered it, that the spiritual advantages we may receive from the holy use of such incommodities are of great recompence and interest; and that in such accidents the holy Jesus having gone before us in precedent, does go

ng with us by love and fair assistances: and
t makes the present condition infinitely more
ible than the greatest splendour of secular for-
e.

THE PRAYER.

blessed and eternal God, who didst suffer thy holy Son to
om the violence of an enraged prince, and didst choose to de-
him in the ways of his infirmity by hiding himself, and a
ntary exile, be thou a defence to all thy faithful people
never persecution arises against them, send them the minis-
f angels to direct them into ways of security, and let thy
y Spirit guide them in the paths of sanctity, and let thy
idence continue in custody over their persons till the times
freshment and the day of redemption shall return. Give,
ord, to thy whole church sanctity and zeal, and the confi-
ces of a holy faith, boldness of confession, humility, content
resignation of spirit, generous contempt of the world, and
ingled desires of thy glory and the edification of thy elect ;
no secular interest disturb her duty, or discompose her cha-
, or depress her hopes, or in any unequal degree possess her
ctions and pollute her spirit; but preserve her from the
es of the world and the devil, from the rapine and greedy
res of sacrilegious persons ; and in all conditions, whether of
ence or want, may she still promote the interests of religion ;
when plenteousness is within her palaces, and peace in her
ls, that condition may then be best for her : and when she is
le as naked as Jesus to his passion, then poverty may be best
her : that in all estates she may glorify thee, and in all acci-
ts and changes thou mayest sanctify and bless her, and at
bring her to the eternal riches and abundances of glory,
re no persecution shall disturb her rest. Grant this, for sweet
us' sake, who suffered exile and hard journeys, and all the in-
veniencies of a friendless person in a strange province ; to
m with thee and the eternal Spirit be glory for ever, and
sing in all generations of the world, and for ever and ever,
en.

SECTION VII.

*Of the younger Years of Jesus, and his Disput
with the Doctors.*

1. FROM the return of this holy family to Ju and their habitation in Nazareth, till the bl child Jesus was twelve years of age, we have thing transmitted to us out of any authentic re but that they went to Jerusalem every year a feast of the passover. And when Jesus was to years old, and was in the holy city attending the paschal rites and solemn sacrifices of the his parents having fulfilled their days of festi went homeward, supposing the child had bee the caravan among his friends; and so they for the space of a whole day's journey; and they sought him, and found him not, they retu to Jerusalem, full of fears and sorrow.

2. No fancy can imagine the doubts, the apprehensions, the possibilities of mischief, and the blings of heart which the holy virgin mother thronging about her fancy and understanding such a person who hath been tempted to the de of a violent fear and transportation, by apprehension of the loss of a hope greater than a mi Her discourses with herself could have nothing distrust, but much of sadness and wonder; an indetermination of her thoughts was a trouble as the passion of her love. Possibly an might have carried him she knew not whither it may be the son of Herod had gotten the which his cruel father missed; or he was sic detained out of curiosity or wonder; or any

but what was right. And by this time she was come to Jerusalem ; and having spent three days in her sad and holy pursuit of her lost jewel, despairing of the prosperous event of any human diligence, as in all other cases she had accustomed, she made her address to God, and entering into the temple to pray, God, that knew her desires, prevented her with the blessings of goodness, and there her sorrow was changed into joy and wonder ; for there she found her holy Son ‘ sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.’

3. ‘ And when they saw him, they were amazed ; and so were ‘ all that heard him, at his understanding and answers ;’ beyond his education, beyond his experience, beyond his years, and even beyond the common spirits of the best men ; discoursing up to the height of a prophet, with the clearness of an angel, and the infallibility of inspiration. For here it was verified in the highest and most literal signification, that ‘ out of the mouths of babes God hath ordained strength ;’ but this was the strength of argument, and science of the highest mysteries of religion and secret philosophy.

4. Glad were the parents of the child to find him illustrated with a miracle, concerning which when he had given them such an account which they understood not, but yet ‘ Mary laid up in her heart,’ as that this was part of his employment and ‘ his Father’s business, he returned with them to Nazareth, and was subject to his parents ;’ where he lived in all holiness and humility, showing great signs of wisdom, endearing himself to all that beheld his conversation, did nothing less than might become the great expectation which his

miraculous birth had created of him; for 'he increased in wisdom and stature, and favour with God and man,' still growing in proportion to his great beginnings to a miraculous excellency of grace, sweetness of demeanour, and excellency of understanding.

5. They that love to serve God in hard questions, use to dispute whether Christ did truly or in appearance only increase in wisdom. For being personally united to the Word, and being the eternal Wisdom of the Father, it seemed to them that a plenitude of wisdom was as natural to the whole person as to the divine nature. But others fixing their belief upon the words of the story, which equally affirms Christ as properly to have increased in favour with God as with man, in wisdom as in stature, they apprehend no inconvenience in affirming it to belong to the verity of human nature, to have degrees of understanding as well as of other perfections. And although the humanity of Christ made up the same person with the divinity, yet they think the divinity still to be free, even in those communications which were imparted to his inferior nature; and the Godhead might as well suspend the emanation of all the treasures of wisdom upon the humanity for a time, as he did the beatifical vision, which most certainly was not imparted in the interval of his sad and dolorous passion. But whether it were truly or in appearance, in habit or in exercise of act, by increase of notion or experience, it is certain the promotions of the holy child were great, admirable, and as full of wonder as of sanctity, and sufficient to entertain the hopes and expectations of Israel with preparations and dispositions, as to satisfy their wonder for the pre-

nt, so to accept him at the time of his publication, they having no reason to be scandalized at the smallness, improbability, and indifferency of its first beginnings.

6. But the holy child had also an employment which he undertook in obedience to his supposed father, for exercise and example of humility, and for the support of that holy family which was dear to the eyes of God, but not very splendid by the opulence of a free and indulgent fortune. He was brought up in the trade of a carpenter; and when Joseph died, which happened before the manifestation of Jesus unto Israel, he wrought alone, and was no more called the carpenter's son, but a carpenter himself. 'Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?'¹ said his offended countrymen. And in this condition the blessed Jesus did abide till he was thirty years old: for he that came to fulfil the law, would not suffer one tittle of it to pass unaccomplished; for by the law of the nation and custom of the religion no priest was to officiate, or prophet was to preach, before he was thirty years of age.

AD. SECTION VII.

Considerations upon the Disputation of Jesus with the Doctors in the Temple.

1. JOSEPH and Mary, being returned unto Nazareth, were sedulous to enjoy the privileges of their country, the opportunities of religion, the public

¹ Mark, vi. 3.

addresses to God in the rites of festivals and solemnities of the temple. They had been long grieved with the impurities and idol-rites which they with sorrow had observed to be done in Egypt; and being deprived of the blessings of those holy societies and employments they used to enjoy in Palestine, at their return came to the offices of their religion with appetites of fire, and keen as the evening wolf: and all the joys which they should have received in respersion and distinct emanations, if they had kept their anniversaries at Jerusalem, all that united they received in the duplication of their joys at their return, and in the fulfilling themselves with the refection and holy viands of religion. For so God uses to satisfy the longings of holy people, when a persecution has shut up the beautiful gates of the temple, or denied to them opportunities of access. Although God hears the prayers they make with their windows towards Jerusalem, with their hearts opened with desires of the public communions, and sends them a prophet with a private meal, as Habakkuk came to Daniel; yet he fills their hearts when the year of jubilee returns, and the people sing *la convertendo*, the song of joy for their redemption. For as of all sorrows the deprivations and eclipses of religion are the saddest, and of the worst and most inconvenient consequence; so in proportion are the joys of spiritual plenty and religious returns: the communion of saints being like the primitive corban, a repository to feed all the needs of the church; or like a taper joined to a torch; itself is kindled and increases the other's flames.

2. They failed not to go to Jerusalem. For all those holy prayers and ravishments of love, those

excellent meditations and intercourses with God, their private readings and discourses were but entertainments and satisfaction of their necessities, they lived with them during their retirements; but it was a feast when they went to Jerusalem, and the dearer and more indulgent refectory of the spirit: for in public solemnities God opens his treasures, and pours out his grace more abundantly. Private devotions and secret offices of religion are like refreshing of a garden with the distilling and petty drops of a water-pot; but addresses at the temple, and serving God in the public communion of saints, is like rain from heaven, where the offices are described by a public spirit, heightened by the greater portions of assistance, and receive advantages by the adunations and symbols of charity, and increment, by their distinct title to promises appropriate even to their assembling and mutual support, by the piety of example, by the communication of counsels, by the awfulness of public observation, and the engagements of holy customs.¹ For religion is a public virtue; it is the ligature of souls, and the great instrument of the conservation of bodies politic, and is united in a common object, the God of all the world, and is managed by public ministries, by sacrifice, adoration, and prayer, in which, with variety of circumstances indeed, but with infinite consent and union of design, all the sons of Adam are taught to worship God: and it is a publication of God's honour, its very purpose being to declare to all the world how great things God hath done for us, whether in public donatives or private missives, so that the very

¹ Leo de jejun. 7. mensis. Idem Serm. iv.

design, temper, and constitution of religion is to be a public address to God. And although God is present in closets, and there also distils his blessing in small rain; yet to the societies of religion an opportunity of public worship as we are invited by the great blessings and advantages of communion, is also we are in some proportions more straitly limited by the analogy and exigence of the duty. It is a persecution when we are forced from public worshippings: no man can hinder our private addresses to God; every man can build a chapel in his breast, and himself be the priest, and his heart be the sacrifice, and every foot of glebe he treads can be the altar; and this no tyrant can prevent. then there can be persecution in the offices of religion it is the prohibition of public profession and communions; and therefore he that denies to himself the opportunities of public rites and conventions is his own persecutor.

3. But when Jesus 'was twelve years old,' at his parents had finished their offices, and returned filled with the pleasures of religion, they missed the child, and 'sought him amongst their kindred but there 'they found him not:' for whoever see Jesus must seek him in the offices of religion, the temple; not amongst the engagements and pursuit of worldly interests. 'I forgot also mine own father's house,' said David, the father of this boy child; and so must we, when we run in an enquiry after the Son of David. But our relinquishing must not be a dereliction of duty, but of engagement: our affections towards kindred must always be with charity, and according to the endearment

¹ Heb. x. 25.

of our relation; but without immersion, and such adherences as either contradict or lessen our duty towards God.

4. It was a sad effect of their pious journey to lose the joy of their family, and the hopes of all the world. But it often happens that after spiritual employments God seems to absent himself, and withdraw the sensible effects of his presence, that we may seek him with the same diligence and care and holy fears with which the holy virgin mother sought the blessed Jesus. And it is a design of great mercy in God to take off the light from the eyes of a holy person, that he may not be abused with complacencies and too confident opinions and reflections upon his fair performances. For we usually judge of the well or ill of our devotions and services by what we feel; and we think God rewards every thing in the present, and by proportion to our own expectations; and if we feel a present rejoicing of spirit, all is well with us, the smoke of the sacrifice ascended right in a holy cloud: but if we feel nothing of comfort, then we count it a prodigy and ominous, and we suspect ourselves, (and most commonly we have reason.) Such irradiations of cheerfulness are always welcome, but it is not always anger that takes them away. The cloud removed from before the camp of Israel, and stood before the host of Pharaoh: but this was a design of ruin to the Egyptians, and of security to Israel. And if those bright angels that go with us to direct our journeys, remove out of our sight and stand behind us, it is not always an argument that the anger of the Lord is gone out against us; but such decays of sense and clouds of spirit are excellent conservators of humility, and

restrain those intemperances and vainer thoughts which we are prompted to in the gaiety of our spirits.

5. But we often give God cause to remove, and for awhile to absent himself; and his doing of it sometimes upon the just provocations of our demerits, makes us at other times with good reason to suspect ourselves even in our best actions. But sometimes we are vain, or remiss, or pride invades us in the darkness and incuriousness of our spirits, and we have a secret sin which God would have us to enquire after. And when we suspect every thing, and condemn ourselves with strictest and most angry sentence, then, it may be, God will with a ray of light break through the cloud; if not, it is nothing the worse for us. For although the visible remonstrance and face of things in all the absences and withdrawings of Jesus be the same, yet if a sin be the cause of it, the withdrawing is a taking away his favour and his love: but if God does it to secure thy piety, and to inflame thy desires, or to prevent a crime, then he withdraws a gift only, nothing of his love, and yet the darkness of the spirit and sadness seem equal. It is hard in these cases to discover the cause, as it is nice to judge the condition of the effect: and therefore it is prudent to ascertain our condition by improving our care and our religion; and in all accidents to make no judgment concerning God's favour by what we feel, but by what we do.

6. When the holy virgin, with much religion and sadness, had sought her joy, at last she found him disputing among the doctors, hearing them, and asking them questions. And besides that he first now opened a fontinel, and there sprang out

xcellent rivulet from his abyss of wisdom, he
 igned this truth to his disciples ; that they
 mean to be doctors and teach others, must in
 first accesses and degrees of discipline learn
 those whom God and public order hath set over
 the mysteries of religion.

THE PRAYER.

essed and most Holy Jesus, fountain of grace and comfort,
 re of wisdom and spiritual emanations, be pleased to abide
 me for ever by the inhabitation of thy interior assistances
 refreshments ; give me a corresponding love, acceptable and
 ined purity, care and watchfulness over my ways, that I
 never, by provoking thee to anger, cause thee to remove thy
 ing, or draw a cloud before thy holy face. But if thou art
 ed, upon a design of charity, or trial, to cover my eyes, that
 y not behold the bright rays of thy favour, nor be refreshed
 spiritual comforts ; let thy love support my spirit by ways
 sible, and in all my needs give me such a portion as may be
 mental and incentive to performance of my duty ; and in
 cidents let me continue to seek thee by prayers, and humi-
 n, and frequent desires, and the strictness of a holy life :
 I may follow thy example, pursue thy footsteps, be sup-
 d by thy strength, guided by thy hand, enlightened by thy
 ir, and may at last, after a persevering holiness and an un-
 ed industry, dwell with thee in the regions of light, and
 al glory, where there shall be no fears of parting from the
 ations of felicity, and the union and fruition of thy pre-
 , O blessed and most holy Jesus. Amen.

SECTION VIII.

Of the Preaching of John the Baptist, preparative to the Manifestation of Jesus.

1. WHEN Herod had drunk so great a draught of blood at Bethlehem, and sought for more from the hill-country, Elizabeth carried her son into the wilderness, there in the desert places and recesses to hide him from the fury of that beast; where she attended him with as much care and tenderness as the affections and fears of a mother could express in the permission of those fruitless solitudes.¹ The child was about eighteen months old when he first fled to sanctuary: but after forty days his mother died; and his father Zachary at the time of his ministration, which happened about this time, was killed in the court of the temple; so that the child was exposed to all the dangers and infelicities of an orphan, in a place of solitariness and discomfort, in a time when a bloody king endeavoured his destruction. But ‘when his father and mother were taken from him, the Lord took him up.’ For according to the tradition of the Greeks, God deputed an angel to be his nourisher and guardian, as he had formerly done to Ishmael,² who dwelt in the wilderness, and to Elias,³ when he fled from the rage of Ahab; so to this child, who came in the spirit of Elias; to make demonstration, that there can be no want where God undertakes the care and provision.⁴

¹ Niceph. lib. i. c. 14. ² Gen. xxi. 17. ³ 1 Kings xix. 5.

⁴ S. Chrys. Hom. de Nativ. S. Jo. Baptistæ.

. The entertainment that St. John's proveditore, angel, gave him was such as the wilderness did afford, and such as might dispose him to a life of severity: for there he continued spending his time in meditations, contemplation, prayer, affects, and colloquies with God, eating flies and wild honey, not clothed in soft, but a hairy garment, and a leathern girdle, till he was thirty years of age.¹ And then, 'being the fifteenth year of Tiberius, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, the word of God came unto John in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching and baptizing.'

1. This John, according to the prophecies of himself designation of his person by the Holy Ghost, as the forerunner of Christ, sent to dispose the people for his entertainment, and prepare his ways: it therefore it was necessary his person should be extraordinary and full of sanctity, and so clarified great concurrences and wonder in the circumstances of his life, as might gain credit and reputation to the testimony he was to give concerning his Lord, the Saviour of the world. And so it happened.

1. For as the Baptist, while he was in the wilderness, became the pattern of solitary and contemplative life, a school of virtue, and example of activity and singular austerity; so at his emigration from the places of his retirement he seemed, that indeed he was, a rare and excellent personage. And the wonders which were great at his

¹ Vestis erat curvi setis conferta cameli,
Contra luxuriam molles duraret ut artus,
Arceretque graves compuncto corpore somnos.

Paulinus.

birth, the prediction of his conception by an angel, which never had before happened but in the persons of Isaac and Samson, the contempt of the world which he bore about him, his mortified countenance and deportment, his austere and eremitical life, his vehement spirit and excellent zeal in preaching, created so great opinions of him among the people, that all held him for a prophet in his office; for a heavenly person in his own particular, and a rare example of sanctity and holy life to all others. And all this being made solemn and ceremonious by his baptism, he prevailed so, that he made excellent and apt preparations for the Lord's appearing: for 'there went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the regions round about Jordan, and were baptized of him, confessing their sins.'

5. The Baptist having by so heavenly means won upon the affections of all men, his sermons and his testimony concerning Christ were the more likely to be prevalent and accepted; and the sum of them was 'repentance and dereliction of sins,' and 'bringing forth the fruits of good life.' In the promoting of which doctrine he was a severe reprehender of the Pharisees and Sadducees; he exhorted the people to works of mercy, the Publicans to do justice and to decline oppression, the soldiers to abstain from plundering and doing violence or rapine; and publishing, that 'he was not the Christ,' that he only 'baptized with water,' but the Messias should 'baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire;' he finally denounced judgment and great severities to all the world if impenitents, even abscision and fire unquenchable. And from this time forward, viz. 'from the days of

John the Baptist, the kingdom of heaven suffered violence, and the violent took it by force.' For now the gospel began to dawn, and John was like the morning-star, or the blushings springing from the windows of the east, foretelling the approach of the Sun of Righteousness. And as St. John the Baptist laid the first rough, hard, and unhewn stone of this building in mortification, self-denial, and doing violence to our natural affections; so it was continued by the master-builder himself, who propounded the glories of the crown of the heavenly kingdom to them only who should climb the cross to reach it. Now it was that multitudes should throng and crowd to enter in at the straight gate, and press into the kingdom; and the younger brothers should snatch the inheritance from the elder, the unlikely from the more likely, the Gentiles from the Jews, the strangers from the natives, the publicans and harlots from the Scribes and Pharisees, who, like violent persons, shall by their importunity, obedience, watchfulness and diligence, snatch the kingdom from them to whom it was first offered; and 'Jacob shall be loved, and Esau rejected.'

AD. SECTION VIII.

Considerations upon the Preaching of John the Baptist.

1. FROM the disputation of Jesus with the doctors to the time of his manifestation to Israel, which was eighteen years, the holy child dwelt in Nazareth in great obedience to his parents, in exemplary

modesty, singular humility, working with his hands in his supposed father's trade, for the support of his own and his mother's necessities, and that he might bear the curse of Adam, that 'in the sweat of his brows he should eat his bread.' All the while 'he increased in favour with God and man,' sending forth excellent testimonies of a rare spirit and a wise understanding, in the temperate instances of such a conversation to which his humility and great obedience had engaged him. But all this while the stream ran underground; and though little bubblings were discerned in all the course, and all the way men looked upon him as upon an excellent person, diligent in his calling, wise and humble, temperate and just, pious and rarely tempered; yet at the manifestation of John the Baptist he broke forth like the stream from the bowels of the earth, or the sun from a cloud, and gave us a precedent, that we should not show our lights to minister to vanity, but then only when God, and public order, and just dispositions of men call for a manifestation. And yet the ages of men have been so forward in propheticall ministeries, and to undertake ecclesiastical employment, that the viciousness and indiscretions and scandals the church of God feels as great burdens upon the tenderness of her spirit, are in great part owing to the neglect of this instance of the prudence and modesty of the holy Jesus.

2. But now the time appointed was come, the Baptist comes forth upon the theatre of Palestine, a forerunner of the office and publication of Jesus: and by the great reputation of his sanctity prevailed upon the affections and judgment of the people, who with much ease believed his doctrine,

when they had reason to approve his life. For the good example of the preacher is always the most prevailing homily: his life is his best sermon. He that will raise affections in his auditory, must affect their eyes: for we seldom see the people weep, if the orator laughs loud and loosely; and there is no reason to think that his discourse should work more with me than himself. If his arguments be fair and specious, I shall think them fallacies, while they have not faith with him: and what necessity for me to be temperate, when he that tells me so sees no such need, but hopes to go to heaven without it? Or if the duty be necessary, I shall learn the definition of temperance, and the latitudes of my permission, and the bounds of lawful and unlawful, by the exposition of his practice. If he binds a burden upon my shoulders, it is but reason I should look for him to bear his portion too. "Good works convince more than miracles;" and the power of ejecting devils is not so great probation that Christian religion came from God, as is the holiness of the doctrine, and its efficacy and productions upon the hearty professors of the institution. S. Pachomius, when he wore the military girdle under Constantine the emperor, came to a city of Christians, who having heard that the army in which he then marched was almost starved for want of necessary provisions, of their own charity relieved them speedily and freely. He wondering at their so free and cheerful dispensation, enquired what kind of people those were whom he saw so bountiful. It was answered, they were Christians, whose profession it is to hurt no man, and to do

good to every man. The pleased soldier was convinced of the excellency of that religion which brought forth men so good and so pious, and loved the mother for the children's sake, threw away his girdle, and became Christian, and religious, and a saint. And it was Tertullian's great argument in behalf of Christians, "See how they love one another; how every man is ready to die for his brother!" It was a living argument and a sensible demonstration of the purity of the fountain, from whence such limpid waters did derive. But so John the Baptist made himself a fit instrument of preparation; and so must all the Christian clergy be fitted for the dissemination of the gospel of Jesus.

3. The Baptist had till this time, that is, about thirty years, lived in the wilderness under the discipline of the Holy Ghost, under the tuition of angels, in conversation with God, in great mortification and disaffections to the world, his garments rugged and uneasy, his meat plain, necessary, and without variety, his employment prayers and devotion, his company wild beasts, in ordinary; in extraordinary, messengers from heaven; and all this not undertaken of necessity, to subdue a bold lust, or to punish a loud crime; but to come more holy and pure from the lesser stains and insinuations of too free infirmities, and to prepare himself for the great ministry of serving the holy Jesus in his publication. Thirty years he lived in great austerity; and it was a rare patience and exemplary mortification. We use not to be so pertinacious in any pious resolutions, but our purposes disband upon the sense of the first violence. We are free and confident of resolving to fast when our bellies are

but when we are called upon by the first
 lies of nature, our zeal is cool, and dissolu-
 tion upon the first temptation, and we are
 held in the violences of a short austerity
 : faintings, and repentances to be repented
 : enquirings after the vow is passed, and
 ng for excuses, and desires to reconcile our
 and our conscience; unless our necessity be
 and our sin clamorous, and our conscience
 and no peace to be had without it. And it
 : if upon any reasonable grounds we can be
 t to suffer contradictions of nature for the
 ages of grace. But it would be remembered,
 the Baptist did more upon a less necessity:
 : possibly the greatness of the example may en-
 : on a little further than the customs of the
 or our own indevotions would engage us.
 but after the expiration of a definite time,
 came forth from his solitude, and served God in
 es. He served God and the content of his
 spirit by his conversing with angels, and
 ues with God so long as he was in the wil-
 s: and it might be some trouble to him to
 : with the impurities of men, amongst whom
 : sure to observe such recesses from perfec-
 : such violation of all things sacred, so great
 : done to all ministries of religion, that to him,
 ad no experience or neighbourhood of actions
 al, it must needs be to his sublimed and cla-
 spirit more punitive and afflictive than his
 shirt and his ascetic diet was to his body:
 : w himself, that tried both, was best able to

atque expletis jucundius est carere quam frui. Cicero
 ct.

judge which state of life was of greatest advantage and perfection.

6. In his solitude he did breathe more pure inspiration, heaven was more open, God was more familiar and frequent in his visitations.¹ In the wilderness his company was angels, his employment meditations and prayer, his temptations simple and from within, from the impotent and lesser rebellions of a mortified body, his occasions of sin as few as his examples, his condition such, that if his soul were at all busy, his life could not easily be other than the life of angels; for his work and recreation, and his visits, and his retirements could be nothing but the variety and differing circumstances of his piety. His inclinations to society made it necessary for him to repeat his addresses to God: for his being a sociable creature, and yet in solitude, made that his conversing with God, and being partaker of divine communications, should be the satisfaction of his natural desires, and the supply of his singularity and retirement; the discomforts of which made it natural for him to seek out for some refreshment, and therefore to go to heaven for it, he having rejected the solaces of the world already. And all this besides the innocencies his silence,² which is very great, and to be judged of in proportion to the infinite extravagancies of our language; there being no greater perfection here to be expected than not to offend in our tongue.³ It was solitude and retirement in which

¹ In solitudine aer purior, cœlum apertius, familiarior Deus. Orig.

² πολλοῖς γὰρ ἀνθρώποισι φάρμακον κακῶν σιγή· μάλιστα δ' ἐπὶ σώφρονος τρόπου σημείον. Carcinus.

³ James iii. Petrus Cellensis, lib. iv. ep. 12.

Jesus kept his vigils, the desert places heard him pray, in a privacy he was born, in the wilderness, he fed his thousands, upon a mountain apart he was transfigured, upon a mountain he died, and from a mountain he ascended to his Father: in which retirements his devotion certainly did receive the advantage of convenient circumstances, and himself in such dispositions twice had the opportunities of glory.

6. And yet after all these excellencies, the Spirit of God called the Baptist forth to a more excellent ministry: for in solitude pious persons might go to heaven by the way of prayers and devotion, but in society they might go to heaven by the way of mercy and charity and dispensations to others. In solitude there are fewer occasions of vices, but there is also the exercise of fewer virtues; and the temptations, though they be not from many objects, yet are in some circumstances more dangerous; not only because the worst of evils, spiritual pride, does seldom miss to creep upon those goodly oaks, like ivy, and suck their heart out; and a great mortifier, without some complacencies in himself, or affectations or opinions, or something of singularity, is almost as unusual as virgin purity and unstained thoughts in the Bordelli; (St. Jerome had tried it, and found it so by experience, and he it was that said so;') but also because whatsoever temptation does invade such retired persons, they have privacies enough to act it in, and no eyes upon them but the eye of heaven,² no shame to

¹ In solitudine citò obrepit superbia. Ep. 4.

² Non minorem flagitiis occasionem secreta præbuerint. Quint. Maxima pars peccatorum tollitur, si peccaturis testis assistat. Senec.

encounter withal, no fears of being discovered: and we know by experience, that a witness of our conversation is a great restraint to the inordination of our actions. Men seek out darkneses and secrecies to commit a sin: and "the evil that no man sees, no man reproveth; and that makes the temptation bold and confident, and the iniquity easy and ready."¹ So that as they have not so many tempters as they have abroad, so neither have they so many restraints: their vices are not so many, but they are more dangerous in themselves, and to the world safe and opportune. And as they communicate less with the world, so they do less charity and fewer offices of mercy. No sermons there but when solitude is made popular, and the city removes into the wilderness; no comforts of a public religion, or visible remonstrances of the communion of saints: and of all the kinds of spiritual mercy, only one can there properly be exercised, and of the corporal none at all. And this is true in lives and institutions of less retirement, in proportion to the degree of the solitude. And therefore church-story reports of divers very holy persons, who left their wildernesses and sweetnesses of devotion in their retirement, to serve God in public, by the ways of charity and exterior offices. Thus St. Antony and Acepsumas came forth to encourage the fainting people to contend to death for the crown of martyrdom;² and Aph-

¹ S. Bern. *Malum quod nemo videt, nemo arguit; ubi non timetur reprehensor, securius accedit tentator, et liberius perpetratur iniquitas.*

² Euseb. *Hist. lib. vi. c. 3. Theod. lib. iv. c. 23, 24. Nihil est illi principi Deo qui omnem hunc mundum regit quod quidem in terris fiat acceptius, quam concilia cœtusque hominum jure sociali, quæ civitates appellantur. Cicer. Somn. Scipion.*

raates, in the time of Valens the Arian emperor, came abroad to assist the church in the suppressing the flames kindled by the Arian faction. And upon this ground they that are the greatest admirers of eremitical life, call the episcopal function the state of perfection, and a degree of ministerial and honorary excellency beyond the pieties and contemplations of solitude, because of the advantages of gaining souls, and religious conversation, and going to God by doing good to others.

7. John the Baptist united both these lives ; and our blessed Saviour, who is the great precedent of sanctity and prudence, hath determined this question in his own instance ; for he lived a life common, sociable, humane, charitable, and public ; and yet for the opportunities of especial devotion retired to prayer and contemplation, but came forth speedily : for the devil never set upon him but in the wilderness, and by the advantage of retirement. For as God hath many, so the devil hath some opportunities of doing his work in our solitariness. But Jesus reconciled both, and so did John the Baptist,' in several degrees and manners : and from both we are taught, that solitude is a good school, and the world is the best theatre ; the institution is best there, but the practice here ; the wilderness hath the advantage of discipline, and society opportunities of perfection ; privacy is the best for devotion, and the public for charity. In both God hath many saints and servants, and from both the devil hath had some. \

8. His sermon was an exhortation to repentance and an holy life : he gave particular schedules of

¹ 'Ο Ἰωάννης φιλήρημος, ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἡμερος ἐν τιθασσὸς ἐν ἀγέλοιος.

duty to several states of persons; sharply reprov'd the Pharisees for their hypocrisy and impiety, it being worse in them, because contrary to their rule, their profession, and institution; gently guided others into the ways of righteousness, calling them the straight ways of the Lord; that is, the direct and shortest way to the kingdom, for of all lines the straight is the shortest: and as every angle is a turning out of the way, so every sin is an obliquity, and interrupts the journey. By such discourses and a baptism he disposed the spirits of men for the entertaining the Messias, and the homilies of the gospel. For John's doctrine was to the sermons of Jesus as a preface to a discourse; and his baptism was to the new institution and discipline of the kingdom as the vigils to a holy-day, of the same kind in a less degree. But the whole economy of it represents to us, that repentance is the first intromission into the sanctities of Christian religion. The Lord treads upon no paths that are not hallowed and made smooth by the sorrows and cares of contrition, and the impediments of sin cleared by dereliction, and the succeeding fruits of emendation. But as it related to the Jews, his baptism did signify, by a cognation to their usual rites and ceremonies of ablution and washing Gentile-proselytes, that the Jews had so far receded from their duty and that holiness which God required of them by the law, that they were in the state of strangers, no better than heathens; and therefore were to be treated as themselves received Gentile proselytes, by a baptism and a new state of life, before they could be fit for the reception of the Messias, or be admitted to his kingdom.

9. It was an excellent sweetness of religion that had entirely possessed the soul of the Baptist, that in so great reputation of sanctity, so mighty concourse of people, such great multitudes of disciples and confidants, and such throngs of admirers, he was humble without mixtures of vanity, and confirmed in his temper and piety against the strength of the most impetuous temptation. And he was tried to some purpose: for when he was tempted to confess himself to be the Christ, he refused it, or to be Elias, or to be accounted that prophet, he refused all such great appellatives, and confessed himself only to be a voice, the lowest of entities, whose being depends upon the speaker: just as himself did upon the pleasure of God, receiving form and publication and employment wholly by the will of his Lord, in order to the manifestation of the word eternal. It were well that the spirits of men would not arrogate more than their own, though they did not lessen their own just dues. It may concern some end of piety or prudence that our reputation be preserved by all just means; but never that we assume the dues of others, or grow vain by the spoils of an undeserved dignity. Honours are the rewards of virtue, or engagement upon offices of trouble and public use; but then they must suppose a preceding worth, or a fair employment. But he that is a plagiary of others' titles or offices, and dresses himself with their beauties, hath no more solid worth or reputation, than he should have nutriment if he ate only with their mouth, and slept their slumbers, himself being open and unbound in all the regions of his senses.

THE PRAYER.

O holy and most glorious God, who before the publication of thy eternal Son, the Prince of Peace, didst send thy servant, John the Baptist, by the examples of mortification, and the rude austerities of a penitential life, and by the sermons of penance to remove all the impediments of sin, that the ways of his Lord and ours might be made clear, ready, and expedite ; be pleased to let thy Holy Spirit lead me in the straight paths of sanctity, without deflections to either hand, and without the interruption of deadly sin, that I may with facility, zeal, assiduity, and a persevering diligence, walk in the ways of the Lord. Be pleased that the axe may be laid to the root of sin, that the whole body of it may be cut down in me, that no fruit of Sodom may grow up to thy displeasure. Thoroughly purge the floor and granary of my heart with thy fan, with the breath of thy diviner Spirit, that it may be a holy repository of graces, and full of benediction and sanctity ; that when our Lord shall come, I may at all times be prepared for the entertainment of so divine a guest, apt to lodge him and to feast him, that he may for ever delight to dwell with me. And make me also to dwell with him, sometimes retiring into his recesses and private rooms by contemplation, and admiring of his beauties, and beholding the secrets of his kingdom ; and at all other times walking in the courts of the Lord's house by the diligences and labours of repentance and an holy life, till thou shalt please to call me to a nearer communication of thy excellencies : which then grant, when by thy gracious assistances I shall have done thy work, and glorified thy holy name, by the strict and never-failing purposes and proportionable endeavours of religion and holiness through the merits and mercies of Jesus Christ. Amen

DISCOURSE IV.

Of Mortification and corporeal Austerities.

1. 'FROM the days of John the Baptist, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the vio-

lent take it by force,' said our Saviour. For now that the new covenant was to be made with man, repentance, which is so great a part of it, being in very many actions a punitive duty, afflictive and vindicative, from the days of the Baptist, (who first by office and solemnity of design published this doctrine,) violence was done to the inclinations and dispositions of man, and by such violences we were to be possessed of the kingdom. And his example was the best commentary upon his text; he did violence to himself: he lived a life in which the rudenesses of camels' hair, and the lowest nutriment of flies and honey of the desert, his life of singularity, his retirement from the sweetnesses of society, his resisting the greatest of temptations, and despising to assume false honours, were instances of that violence, and explications of the doctrine of self-denial and mortification, which are the pedestal of the cross, and the supporters of Christianity, as it distinguishes from all laws, religions, and institutions of the world.

2. Mortification is the one half of Christianity: it is a dying to the world, it is a denying of the will and all its natural desires; and abstinence from pleasure and sensual complacencies, that the flesh being subdued to the spirit, both may join in the service of God, and in the offices of holy religion.¹ It consists in actions of severity and renunciation; it refuses to give entertainment to any vanity, nor uses a freer licence in things lawful, lest it be tempted to things unlawful; it kills the lust of the flesh by taking away its fuel and incentives, and

¹ Τὴν ἐπὶ καθαιρέσει τοῦ φρονήματος σαρκὸς πρὸς τὸν τῆς υσεβείας σκοπὸν ἐπιτηδευομένην ἀποχὴν τῶν ἡδύων. S. Basil.

by using to contradict its appetite, does it with more facility to obey the superior faculty, and, in effect, it is nothing but a great casuistry, and a prudent and severe using such remedies and instruments which in nature and are made apt for the production of our purpose. And it consists in interior and exterior exercises, these being but instruments of the interior, the body is organical or instrumental to the soul, no part of the duty itself, but as they are stages to the end, the mortification of the body, which, by whatsoever means we have once attained, and do continue, we are disobliged from all exterior severities, unless by accident they can be obligatory, and from some other cause.

3. Mortification of the will or the spirit, that is the duty; that the will of man may obey God, and absolutely rule its inferior faculties; that the inordinations of our natural desires, begun by Adam's sin, and continued and increased by our continuing evil customs, may be placed in the right order; that since many divine precepts are restraints upon our natural desires, we should so deny those appetites that they may not hinder natural satisfactions, that they may not turn themselves by disserving God. For therefore our own wills are our greatest dangers and our greatest enemies, because they tend to courses contrary to God. God commands us to be humble, our own desires are to be great, considerably high; and we are never secure enough from temptation, unless we can place our neighbours' feet: here therefore we must deny our will, our appetites of greatness, for the purchase of humility. God commands temperance and chastity; on

sires and natural promptness break the bands asunder, and entertain dissolutions to the licentiousness of Apicius, or the wantonness of a Mahometan paradise, sacrificing meat and drink-offerings to our appetites, as if our stomachs were the temples of Bel, and making women and the opportunities of lust to be our dwelling and our employment, even beyond the common loosenesses of entertainment. Here therefore we must deny our own wills, our appetites of gluttony and drunkenness, and our prurient beastly inclinations, for the purchase of temperance and chastity. And every other virtue is either directly or by accident, a certain instance of this great duty, which is, like a catholicon, purgative of all distemperatures, and is the best preparative and disposition to prayer in the world.

4. For it is a sad consideration, and of secret reason, that since prayer of all duties is certainly the sweetest and easiest, it having in it no difficulty or vexatious labour, no weariness of bones, no dimness of eyes or hollow cheeks is directly consequent to it, no natural desires of contradictory quality, nothing of disease, but much of comfort and more of hope in it; yet we are infinitely averse from it, weary of its length, glad of an occasion to pretermitt our offices: and yet there is no visible cause of such indisposition, nothing in the nature of the thing, nor in the circumstances necessarily appendant to the duty. Something is amiss in us, and it wanted a name, till the Spirit of God, by enjoining us the duty of mortification, hath taught us to know that immortification of spirit is the cause of all our secret and spiritual indispositions: we are so incorporated to the desires of

sensual objects, that we feel no relish or the spiritual. It is as if a lion should eat an ox venison; there is no proportion between object and the appetite, till by mortification first desires our wills are made spiritual, apprehensions supernatural and clarified. a cook told Dionysius the tyrant, the black of Lacedæmon will not do well at Syracuse if it be tasted by a Spartan's palate; so neither the excellencies of heaven be discerned by a spirit disrelishing the sottish appetites of the flesh and accustomed to diviner banquets. As the temple was mystically signified by the two altars in Dionysius's temple, in the outer court where oxen were sacrificed, in the inner court an altar of incense: the first representing mortification of our beastly appetites; the second thing setting up our prayers, which are not likely to come a pleasant offertory, unless our impurities be removed by the atonement made by the sacrifices: without our spirit be mortified neither can we love to pray, nor can God hear us.

5. But there are three steps to ascend to the altar. The first is, to abstain from satisfying carnal desires in the instances of sin; although the furnace flames with vehement passions at some times, yet to walk in the midst of burning without being consumed, like the candle of the captivity, that is the duty even of the imperfect, and is commonly the condition of good persons whose interest in secular elements speaks fair, and solicits often, and highly; yet they manage their affairs with equal justice, and a constant charity, and are

rate in their daily meals, chaste in the solaces of marriage, and pure in their spirits, unmingled with sordid affections in the midst of their possessions and enjoyments. These men are in the world, but they are strangers here: they ‘have a city, but not an abiding one:’¹ they are proselytes of the house, but have made no covenant with the world.² For though they desire with secular desires, yet it is but for necessities, and then they are content: they use the creatures with freedom and modesty, but never to intemperance and transgression:³ so that their hands are below, tied there by the necessities of their life; but their hearts are above, lifted up by the abstractions of this first degree of mortification. And this is the first and nicest distinction between a man of the world and a man of God; for this state is a denying our affections nothing but the sin, it enjoys as much of the world as may be consistent with the possibilities of heaven: a little less than this is the state of immortification, and ‘a being in the flesh,’ which (saith the apostle) ‘cannot inherit the kingdom of God.’ The flesh must first be separated, and the adherences pared off from the skin, before the parchment be fit to make a schedule for use, or to transmit a record: whatsoever in the sense of the Scripture is flesh, or an enemy to the Spirit, if it be not rescinded and mortified, makes that the laws of God cannot be written in our hearts. This is the doctrine St. Paul taught the church: ‘For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.’⁴ This first mortification is

¹ Heb. xi. 13.² 2 Cor. v. 6.³ 1 Tim. vi. 8.⁴ Rom. viii. 13.

the way of life, if it continues ; but its continuance is not secured, till we are advanced towards life by one degree more of this death. For this condition is a state of a daily and dangerous warfare, as many inroads are made by sin, and many times hurt is done and booty carried off: for he that is but thus far mortified, although his dwelling is within the kingdom of grace, yet it is in the borders of it, and hath a dangerous neighbourhood. If we mean to be safe, we must remove into the heart of the land, or carry the war further off.

6. Secondly, We must not only be strangers here, but we must be dead too, dead unto the world that is, we must not only deny our vices, but our passions ;¹ not only contradict the direct immediate persuasion to a sin, but also cross the inclination to it. So long as our appetites are high and full, we shall never have peace or safety, like the dangers and insecurities of a full war against a potent enemy; we are always disputing the question, ever struggling for life; but when our passions are killed, when our desires are little and low, then grace reigns, then our life is hid with Christ in God, then we have fewer interruptions in the way of righteousness, then we are not so liable to be surprised by sudden eruptions and transportation of passions, and our piety itself is more prudent and reasonable, chosen with a freer election, discerned with clearer understanding, he more in it of judgment than of fancy, and is more spiritual and angelical. He that is apt to be angry, though he be habitually careful and full of observation that he sin not, may at some time

¹ O quàm contempta res est homo, nisi super humana se erigat! Sen.

ther be surprised, when his guards are undilient, and without actual expectation of an enemy: but if his anger be dead in him, and the inclination lessened to the indifferency and gentleness of a child, the man dwells safe because of the impotency of his enemy, or that he is reduced to obedience, or hath taken conditions of peace. He that hath refused to consent to actions of uncleanness, which he was strongly tempted, hath won a victory by fine force, God hath blessed him well: but an opportunity may betray him instantly, and the sin may be in upon him unawares; unless also his desires be killed, he is betrayed by a party within. David was a holy person, but he was surprised by the sight of Bathsheba: for his freer use of permitted beds had kept the fire alive, which was apt to be put into a flame when so fair a beauty reflected through his eyes. But Joseph was a virgin, and kept under all his inclinations to looser thoughts; opportunity, and command, and violence, and beauty did make no breach upon his spirit.

7. He that is in the first state of pilgrimages does not mutiny against his superiors, nor publish their faults, nor envy their dignities: but he that is dead to the world sees no fault that they have; and when he hears an objection, he buries it in an excuse, and rejoices in the dignity of their persons. Every degree of mortification endures reproof without murmur: but he that is quite dead to the world and to his own will feels no regret against it, and hath no secret thoughts of trouble and unwillingness to the suffering, save only that he is sorry he deserved it. "For so a dead body resists not your violence, changes not its posture you

placed it in, strikes not his striker, is not moved by your words, nor provoked by your scorn, nor is troubled when you shrink with horror at the sight of it; only it will hold the head downward in all its situations, unless it be hindered by violence." And a mortified spirit is such, without indignation against scorn, without revenge against injuries, without murmuring at low offices, not impatient in troubles, indifferent in all accidents, neither transported with joy or depressed with sorrow, and is humble in all his thoughts. And thus 'he that is dead' (saith the apostle) 'is justified from sins.'¹ And this is properly a state of life, in which by the grace of Jesus we are restored to a condition of order and interior beauty in our faculties, our actions are made moderate and humane, our spirits are even, and our understandings undisturbed.

8. For passions of the sensitive soul are like an exhalation, hot and dry, borne up from the earth upon the wings of a cloud, and detained by violence out of its place, causing thunders, and making eruptions into lightning and sudden fires. There is a tempest in the soul of a passionate man: and though every wind does not shake the earth, nor rend trees up by the root, yet we call it violent and ill weather, if it only make a noise and is harmless. And it is an inordination in the spirit of a man, when his passions are tumultuous and mighty: though they do not determine directly upon a sin, they discompose his peace, and disturb his spirit, and make it like troubled waters, in which no man can see his own figure and just proportions; and therefore, by being less a man, he

¹ Rom. vi. 7.

e so much a Christian, in the midst of so
dispositions. For although the cause may
be passion, (and if a man be very angry
a cause, it is zeal, not fury,) yet the cause
secure the person from violence, transporta-
d inconvenience. When Elisha was con-
y three kings concerning the success of
sent expedition, he grew so angry against
is Joram, and was carried on to so great
of disturbance, that when for Jehosaphat's

was content to inquire of the Lord, he
or a minstrel, who by his harmony might
se his disunited and troubled spirit, that
ight be apter for divination.¹ And some-
is zeal goes besides the intention of the
d beyond the degrees of prudent or lawful,
ages in a sin, though at first it was zeal for

For so it happened in Moses, 'at the
of Massah and Meribah he spake fool-
nd yet it was when he was zealous for
d extremely careful of the people's interest.

passion he was hindered from entering
land of promise. And we also, if we be
erate and well-tempered, even in our pas-
God, may, like Moses, break the tables of the
throw them out of our hands, with zeal to
m preserved: for passion violently snatches
onclusion, but is inconsiderate and incuri-
erning the premises. The sum and pur-
this discourse is that saying of our blessed
, 'He that will be my disciple must deny
'² that is, not only desires that are sinful,
res that are his own, pursuances of his own

affections, and violent motions, though to things not evil or in themselves contagious.

9. Thirdly, And yet there is a degree of mortification of spirit beyond this: for the condition of our security may require, that we not only deny to act our temptations, or to pleasure our natural desires, but also to seek opportunities of doing displeasure to our affections, and violence to our inclinations, and not only to be indifferent, but to choose a contradiction and a denial to our strongest appetites, to rejoice in a trouble. And this was the spirit of St. Paul: 'I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulations;' and, 'we glory in it.'¹ Which joy consists not in any sensitive pleasure any man can take in afflictions and adverse accidents, but in a despising the present inconveniences, and looking through the cloud unto those great felicities, and graces, and consignations to glory which are the effects of the cross. 'Knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed:'² that was the incentive of St. Paul's joy. And therefore, as it may consist with any degree of mortification to pray for the taking away of the cross, upon condition it may consist with God's glory and our ghostly profit; so it is properly an act of this virtue to pray for the cross, or to meet it, if we understand it may be for the interest of the spirit. And thus St. Basil prayed to God to remove his violent pains of head-ach: but when God heard him, and took away his pain, and lust came in the place of it, he prayed to God to restore him his head-ach again. That cross was gain and joy,

¹ 2 Cor. vii. 4; Rom. v. 3.

² Rom. v. 3, 4, 5.

when the removal of it was so full of danger and emptation. And this the masters of spiritual life call being crucified with Christ; because as Christ chose the death, and desired it by the appetites of the spirit, though his flesh smarted under it, and groaned and died with the burden; so do all that are thus mortified, they place misfortunes and sadness amongst things eligible, and set them before the eyes of their desire, although the flesh and the desires of sense are factious and bold against such sufferings.

10. Of these three degrees of interior or spiritual mortification, the first is duty, the second is counsel, and the third is perfection. We sin if we have not the first; we are in danger without the second; but without the third we cannot be perfect as our heavenly Father is, but shall have more of human infirmities to be ashamed of, than can be excused by the accrescencies and condition of our nature. The first is only of absolute necessity; the second is prudent, and of greatest convenience; but the third is excellent and perfect. And it was the consideration of a wise man, that the saints in heaven, who understand the excellent glories and vast differences of state and capacities amongst beatified persons, although they have no envy nor sorrows, yet if they were upon earth with the same notion and apprehensions they have in heaven, would not for all the world lose any degree of glory, but mortify to the greatest eminency, that their glory may be a derivation of the greatest ray of light; every degree being of compensation glorious, and disproportionably beyond the incon-

¹ Κάθαρσις μὲν ἀπὸ τῆς ὕλικῆς ἀλογίας. &c. Hierocl. in Pythag.

siderable troubles of the greatest self-denial. God's purpose is, that we abstain from sin ; there is no more in the commandment :¹ and therefore we must deny ourselves, so as not to admit a sin, under pain of a certain and eternal curse. But the other degrees of mortification are by accident so many degrees of virtue, not being enjoined or counselled for themselves, but for the preventing of crimes, and for securities of good life : and therefore are parts and offices of Christian prudence, which whosoever shall positively reject, is neither much in love with virtue, nor careful of his own safety.

11. Secondly, But mortification hath also some designs upon the body. For the body is the shop and forge of the soul, in which all her designs which are transient upon external objects are framed : and it is a good servant, as long as it is kept in obedience and under discipline ; but ' he that breeds his servant delicately,' will find him contumacious and troublesome, bold and confident as his son :² and therefore St. Paul's practice (as himself gives account of it) was to ' keep his body under, and bring it into subjection, lest he should become a cast-away.'³ For the desires of the body are in the same things, in which themselves are satisfied are so many injuries to the soul : because upon every one of the appetites a restraint is made, and a law placed for sentinel, that if we transgress the bounds fixed by the divine commandment, it

¹ S. Bonavent. *Tantum gloriam omni hora negligimus, quanto bona interim facere possemus, si otiose eam transigimus.*

² Prov. xxix. 21.

³ 1 Cor. ix. 27 ; Rom. vi. 4 ; Heb. xii. 1. ; 1 Pet. ii. 1, and iv. 1.

becomes a sin. Now it is hard for us to keep them within compass, because they are little more than agents merely natural, and therefore cannot interrupt their act, but covet and desire as much as they can without suspension or coercion, but what comes from without: which is therefore the more troublesome, because all such restraint are against nature, and without sensual pleasure. And therefore this is that which St. Paul said, ‘when we were in the flesh, the passions of sin which were by the law did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death.’¹ For these pleasures of the body draw us as loadstones draw iron, not for love, but for prey and nutriment: it feeds upon the iron, as the bodily pleasures upon the life of the spirit, which is lessened and impaired according as the gusts of the flesh grow high and sapid.

12. He that feeds a lion must obey him, unless he makes his den to be his prison.² Our lusts are as wild and as cruel beasts, and unless they feel the load of fetters and of laws, will grow unruly and troublesome, and increase upon us, as we give them food and satisfaction. He that is used to drink high wines, is sick if he hath not his proportion, to what degree soever his custom hath brought his appetite; and to some men temperance becomes certain death, because the inordination of their desires hath introduced a custom, and custom hath increased those appetites, and made them almost natural in their degree: but he that hath been used to hard diet and the pure stream, his refreshments are much within the limits of tem-

¹ Rom. vii. 5.

² Αἰσχροὺν τῶν μὲν οἰκετῶν ἀρχεῖν, ταῖς δὲ ἡδοναῖς δηλεῦν. Isoc. ad Demonic.

perance, and his desires as moderate as his diet. St. Jerome affirms, that to be continent in the state of widowhood is harder than to keep our virgin pure: and there is reason that then the appetite should be harder to be restrained, when it hath not been accustomed to be denied, but satisfied in its freer solicitations. When a fontinel is once opened, all the symbolical humours run thither, and issue out; and it is not to be stopped without danger, unless the humour be purged or diverted: so is the satisfaction of an impure desire, it opens the issue, and makes way for the emanation of all impurity, and, unless the desire be mortified, will not be stopped by purposes and easy desires.

13. Since therefore the body is the instrument of sins, the fuel and the incentive, our mortification must reach thither also, at least in some degrees, or it will be to small purpose to think of mortifying our spirit in some instances of temptation. In vain does that man think to keep his honour and chastity, that invites his lust to an activeness by soft beds and high diet, and idleness and opportunity. Make the soul's instrument unapt, and half the work is done. And this is true in all instances of carnality or natural desires, whose scene lies in the lower region of passions, and are acted by the body. But the operation of the cure must be in proportion to the design: as the mortification of the spirit is in several degrees, so the mortification of the body also hath its several parts of prudence, injunction, and necessity. For the prescribing all sorts of mortifications corporeal, indefinitely and indiscriminately to all persons, without separation of their ends and distinct capacities, is a snare to men's consciences, makes religion impertinently

troublesome, occasions some men to glory in corporeal austerity, as if of itself it were an act of piety, and a distinction of the man from the more imperfect persons of the world, and is all the way unreasonable and inartificial.

14. First, therefore, such whose engagements in the world or capacities of person confine them to the lowest and first step of mortification, those who fight only for life and liberty, not for privileges and honour, that are in perpetual contestation and close fightings with sin, it is necessary that their body also be mortified in such a degree, that their desires transport them not beyond the permissions of divine and human laws: let such men be strict in the rules of temperance and sobriety, be chaste within the laws of marriage, cherish their body to preserve their health, and their wealth to serve God, and to do their offices. To these persons the best instruments of discipline are the strict laws of temperance, denying all transgressions of the appetite boiling over its margin and proper limit, assiduous prayer, and observation of the public laws of fasting, which are framed so moderate and even, as to be proportionable to the common manner of living of persons secular and unnumbered. For though many persons of common employments and even manner of living, have, in the midst of worldly avocations, undertaken austerities very rude and rigorous, yet it was in order to a higher mortification of spirit: and it is also necessary they should, if either naturally or habitually, or easily they suffer violent transportation of passions. For since the occasions of anger and disturbance in the world frequently occur, if such passions be not restrained by greater violence

than is competent to the ordinary offices of a moderate piety, the cure is weaker than the humour, and so leaves the work imperfect.

15. Secondly, But this is coincident to the second degree of mortification : for if either out of desire of a further step towards perfection, or out of the necessities of nature or evil customs, it be necessary also to subdue our passions as well as the direct invitations to sin, in both these cases the body must suffer more austerities, even such as directly are contrariant to every passionate disturbance, though it be not ever sinful in the instance. All mortifiers must abstain from every thing that is unlawful ; but these, that they may abstain from things unlawful, must also deny to themselves satisfaction in things lawful and pleasant. And this is in a just proportion to the end, the subduing the passions, lest their liberty and boldness become licentious. And we shall easier deny their importunity to sin, when we will not please them in those things in which we may : such in which the fear of God, and the danger of our souls, and the convictions of reason and religion do not immediately cooperate. And this was the practice of David ; when he had thirsted for the water of Bethlehem, and some of his worthies ventured their lives and brought it, ‘ he refused to drink it, but poured it upon the ground unto the Lord ; ’ that is, it became a drink-offering unto the Lord ; an acceptable oblation, in which he sacrificed his desires to God ; denying himself the satisfaction of such a desire which was natural and innocent, save that it was something nice, delicate, and curious. Like

this was the act of the fathers in the mountain Nitria,¹ to one of which a fair cluster of grapes being sent, he refused to taste them, lest he should be too sensual and much pleased, but sent them to another, and he to a third ; and the same consideration transmitted the present through all their cells, till it came to the first man again : all of them not daring to content their appetite in a thing too much desired, lest the like importunity in the instance of a sin should prevail upon them. To these persons, the best instruments of discipline are subtractions, rather than imposition of austerities : let them be great haters of corporeal pleasures, eating for necessity, diet spare and cheap, abridging and making short the opportunities of natural and permitted solaces, refusing exterior comforts,² not choosing the most pleasant object, not suffering delight to be the end of eating, and therefore separating delight from it as much as prudently they may ; not being too importunate with God to remove his gentler hand of paternal correction, but inuring ourselves to patient suffering, and indifferent acceptation of the cross that God lays upon us ; at no hand living delicately, or curiously, or impatiently. And this was the condition of St. Paul, suffering with excellent temper all those persecutions and inconveniencies which the enemies of religion loaded him withal ; which he called ‘ bearing the marks of the Lord Jesus in his body,’ and ‘ carrying about in his body the dying,’ or mortification ‘ of the Lord Jesus.’³ It was in the matter

¹ Apud Pallad. in *Histor. Lausiaca*.

² *Quantò quisque sibi plura negaverit, à Diis plura feret. Iorat.*

³ *Gal. vi. 17; 2 Cor. iv. 10.*

of persecution ; which, because he bore patiently, and was accustomed to, and he accepted with indifference and renunciation, they were the mortifications and the marks of Jesus ; that is, a true conformity to the passion of Christ, and of great effect and interest for the preventing sins by the mortification of his natural desires.

16. Thirdly, But in the pale of the church there are and have been many tall cedars, whose tops have reached to heaven ; some there are that choose afflictions of the body, that by turning the bent and inclination of their affections into sensual displeasures, they may not only cut off all pretensions of temptation, but grow in spiritual graces, and perfections intellectual and beatified. To this purpose they served themselves, with the instances of sackcloth, hard lodging, long fasts, pernoctation in prayers, renunciation of all secular possessions, great and expensive charity, bodily labours to great weariness and affliction, and many other prodigies of voluntary suffering, which Scripture and the ecclesiastical stories do frequently mention. St. Louis, king of France, wore sackcloth every day, unless sickness hindered ; and St. Zenobius as long as he was a bishop. And when Severus Sulpitius sent a sackcloth to St. Paulinus bishop of Nola, he returned to him a letter of thanks, and discoursed piously concerning the use of corporeal austerities. And that I need not instance, it was so general, that this was, by way of appropriation, called ‘ the garment of the church,’¹ because of the frequent use of such instruments of exterior mortification. And

¹ *Deposuerunt seculi byssum, et sumpserunt ecclesie vestimentum, quod est cilicium. Ruricius, Ep. 20. Euseb. Hist. lib. ii. c. 22. Clem. Alex. Pædag. lib. ii. c. 1.*

so it was in other instances. St. James neither ate flesh nor drank wine; St. Matthew lived upon acorns, seeds, and herbs; and, amongst the elder Christians, some rolled themselves naked in snows, some upon thorns, some on burning coals; some chewed bitter pills and masticated gums, and sipped frequently of horrid potions, and wore iron upon their skin, and bolts upon their legs, and in witty torments excelled the cruelty of many of their persecutors, whose rage determined quickly in death, and had certainly less of torment than the tedious afflictions and rude penances of Simeon, surnamed Stylites. But as all great examples have excellencies above the ordinary devotions of good people, so have they some danger, and much consideration.

17. First, Therefore I consider that these bodily and voluntary self-afflictions can only be of use in carnal and natural temptations; of no use in spiritual. For ascetic diet, hard lodging, and severe disciplines cannot be directly operative upon the spirit, but only by mediation of the body, by abating its extravagances, by subtracting its maintenance, by lessening its temptations: these may help to preserve the soul chaste or temperate, because the scene of these sins lies in the body, and thence they have their maintenance, and from thence also may receive their abatements. But in actions which are less material, such as pride, and envy, and blasphemy, and impenitence, and all the kinds and degrees of malice, external mortifications do so little co-operate to their cure, that oftentimes they are their greatest inflamers and incentives, and are like cordials given to cure a cold fit of an ague, *they do their work, but bring a hot fit in its place:*

and besides that great mortifiers have been so assaulted by the spirit of pride, we find that fasters are naturally angry and choleric. Some found it in himself, and Ruffinus felt of the effects of it. And therefore this last corporeal mortification, and the choosing such afflictions by a voluntary imposition, is at no time to be applied in all cases, but in cases of lust only, intemperance or natural impatience, or such evils which dwell in the senses. And then it also may be considered, whether or no rudeness to the body, when applied for the obtaining of patience, be not a temptation to impatience, a provoking thereof, and a running into that whither we pray that we would not suffer us to be led. Possibly such austerities, if applied with great caution and wisdom, in some circumstances, may be an exercise of patience, if the grace is by other means acquired; and he who finds them so may use them, if he dares trust himself; but as they are dangerous before the grace is obtained, so when it is, they are not necessary. And still it may be enquired in the case of temptations to lust, whether any such austerities can consist with health will do the work. So long as the body is in health, it will do its offices correctly; if it is not in health, it cannot do all offices of grace, nor many of our calling. And therefore though they may do some advantage to persons tempted with the lowest sins; yet they will not do it all, nor do it alone, nor are they safe to apply in all positions. And where they are useful to smaller and lower purposes, yet we must be careful to observe, that the mortification of the spirit for the greatest and most perfect purposes is to be effected upon by means spiritual and of immediate effect.

they are the lowest operations of the soul which moved and produced by actions corporeal ; the may from those become lustful or chaste, full or sad, timorous or confident ; but yet even these the soul receives but some dispositions, and more forward inclinations. But nothing from the body can be operative in the being or increase of charity, or the love of God, or in mortifying spiritual and intellectual : and therefore those greater perfections and acts of the soul, such as are designed in this highest degree of mortification, are not apt to be aided by corporeal austerities. And Nigrinus Emicius finds fault with those philosophers who thought virtue was to be purchased by cutting the flesh with whips, binding the nerves, razing the temples with iron : but he taught, that virtue is to be raised in the mind by actions internal and immaterial, and that from thence remedies are to be devised against perturbations and actions criminal. This is determined by the apostle in fairest relation : ‘ Mortify therefore your earthly members ’ and he instances in carnal crimes, ‘ fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness ; ’ which are things may something abated by corporeal mortifications : that these are by distinct manner to be helped against other more spiritual vices, he adds, ‘ but now therefore put off all these ; anger, wrath, malice, hatred, envy, filthy communication, and lying. ’² To these sorts of sins, mortification being the general remedy, particular applications are to be made ; and it must be only spiritual, or also cor-

¹ Col. iii. 5.² Ibid. ver. 8.

pooreal, in proportion to the nature of the sins. He seems to distinguish the remedy by separation of the nature of the crimes; and possibly also by the differing words of 'mortify,'¹ applied to carnal, sins, and 'put off,'² to crimes spiritual.

18. Secondly, But in the lesser degrees of mortification, in order to subduing of all passions of the sensitive appetite, and the consequent and symbolical sins, bodily austerities are of good use, if well understood, and prudently undertaken.³ To which purpose I also consider, no acts of corporeal austerity or external religion are of themselves to be esteemed holy or acceptable to God, are nowhere precisely commanded, no instruments of union with Christ, no immediate parts of divine worship; and therefore to suffer corporeal austerities with thoughts determining upon the external action, or imaginations of sanctity inherent in the action, is against the purity, the spirituality, and simplicity of the gospel. And this is the meaning of St. Paul: 'It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace, not with meats, which have not profited them which have walked in them;'⁴ and, 'The kingdom of God consists not in meat and drink, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;'⁵ and, 'Bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things.'⁶ Now if external mortifications are not for themselves, then they are to receive their estimate as they co-operate to the end. Whatsoever is a prudent restraint of an extravagant passion, whatsoever is a direct denial of a sin, whatsoever makes

¹ Νεκρώσατε τὰ μέλη.

² Ἀπόθεσθε τὰ πάντα.

³ Ὁ ἐγγὺς κυρίου πλήρης ματίγων. Clem. Alexand. Pædag. ii.

⁴ Heb. xiii. 9.

⁵ Rom. xiv. 17.

⁶ 1 Tim. iv. 8.

revision for the spirit, or withdraws the fuel from the impure fires of carnality, that is an act of mortification : but those austerities which Baal's priests did use, or the Flagellantes, an ignorant faction that went up and down villages whipping themselves, or those which return periodically on a set day of discipline, and using rudenesses to the body by way of ceremony and solemnity, not directed against the actual incursion of a pungent lust, are not within the verge of the grace of mortification. For unless the temptation to a carnal sin be actually incumbent and pressing upon the soul, pains of affliction and smart do not benefit toward suppressing the habit of inclination : for such sharp disciplines are but short and transient troubles ; and although they take away the present fancies of temptation, yet unless it be rash and uncharitable, there is no effect remanent upon the body, but that the temptation may speedily return. As is the anger, so must be the application of the remedy. Actual severities are not imprudently undertaken in case of imminent danger : but to cure an habitual lust, such corporeal mortifications are most reasonable whose effect is permanent, and which takes away whatsoever does minister more fuel, and puts a torch to the pile.

19. But this is altogether a discourse of Christian prudence, not of precise duty and religion : for if we do by any means provide for our indemnity, and secure our innocence, all other exterior mortifications are not necessary, and they are convenient in as they do facilitate or co-operate towards the end. And if that be well understood, it will concern us that they be used with prudence and caution, with *unity of intention*, and without pride. For since

they are nothing in themselves, but are hallowed and adopted into the family of religious actions by participation of the end, the doing them not for themselves, takes off all complacency and fancy reflecting from an opinion of the external actions, guides and purifies the intention, and teaches us to be prudent in the managing of those austerities, which as they are in themselves afflictive, so have in them nothing that is eligible, if they be imprudent.

20. And now supposing these premises as our guide to choose and enter into the action, prudence must be called in to the execution and discharge of it, and the manner of its managing. And for the prudential part, I shall first give the advice of Nigrinus in the discipline of the old philosophers: "He that will best institute and instruct men in the studies of virtue and true philosophy, must have a regard to the mind, to the body, to the age, to the former education, and capacities or incapacities of the person." ¹ To which all such circumstances may be added as are to be accounted for in all prudent estimations; such as are national customs, dangers of scandal, the presence of other remedies, or disbanding of the inclination.

21. Secondly, It may also concern the prudence of this duty, not to neglect the smallest inadvertencies and minutes of lust or spiritual inconvenience, but to contradict them in their weakness and first beginnings. We see that great disturbances are wrought from the smallest occasions meeting with an impatient spirit; like great flames kindled from a little spark fallen into a heap of prepared nitre. St.

¹ Καὶ τὸν ἀριστα παιδεύειν ἄνθρωπος προαιρούμενον, τὰ τοῦ μὲν ψυχῆς, τὸ τοῦ δὲ σώματος, τὸ τοῦ ἐκ ἡλικίας τε καὶ τῆς προτιμῆς ἀγωγῆς ἐτοχᾶσθαι. Luc. Nigr.

Austin tells a story of a certain person, "much vexed with flies in the region of his dwelling, and himself heightened the trouble by too violent and busy reflections upon the inconsiderableness of the instrument, and the greatness of the vexation alighting upon a peevish spirit. In this disposition he was visited by a Manichee, (an heretic that denied God to be the maker of things visible.) He being busy to rub his infection upon the next thing he met, asked the impatient person whom he thought to be the maker of flies? He answered, 'I think the devil was, for they are instruments of great vexation and perpetual trouble.' What he rather fancied than believed, or expressed by anger rather than at all had entertained within, the Manichee confirmed by such arguments, to which his adversary was very apt to give consent, by reason of his impatience and peevishness. The Manichee having set his foot upon his first breach, proceeded in his question, 'If the devil made flies, why not bees, who are but a little bigger, and have a sting too?' The consideration of the sting made him fit to think, that the little difference in bigness needed not a distinct and greater efficient, especially since the same workman can make a great as well as a little vessel. The Manichee proceeded, 'if a bee, why not a locust? if a locust, then a lizard? if a lizard, then a bird? if a bird, then a lamb?' and thence he made bold to proceed to a cow, to an elephant, to a man. His adversary by this time being ensnared by granting so much, and now ashamed not to grant more, lest his first concessions should seem unreasonable and impious, confessed the devil to be the maker of all creatures visible."

The use which is made of this story is this, that the devil do not abuse us in flies, and pour our spirits by trifles and impertinent accidents, if we be unmortified in our smallest motions, not imaginable we should stand the blast of petuous accident and violent perturbation. not therefore give our passions course in an accident, because the instance is inconsiderable, for though it be, the consequence may be dangerous, and a wave may follow a wave, till the infection be general and desperate. And therefore it is intended for advice, that we be observant of the accidents of our domestic affairs, and that every trifling inadvertency of a servant, slight misbecoming action, or imprudent word, not apprehended as instruments of vexation : many small occasions, if they be productive of many small disturbances, will produce an habitual churlishness and immortification of spirit.

22. Thirdly, Let our greatest diligence and care be employed in mortifying our predominant passion. For if our care be so great as not to contain the smallest, and our resolution so strong and holy as not to be subdued by the greatest and most passionate desires, the Spirit hath done all its work, it secures the future, and sanctifies the present. nothing is wanting but perseverance in the same prudence and religion. And this is typically commanded in the precept of God to Moses and Aaron in the matter of Peor : ‘ Vex the Midianites, because they vexed you, and made you sin by their daughters.’ And Phinehas did so; he killed an Egyptian of the house of Simeon, and a princess of Midian, and God confirmed the priesthood to him for ever, meaning, that we shall for ever be admitted

r relation to God, if we sacrifice to God our
st lust. And this is not so properly an act, as
ad of mortification. Therefore it concerns the
ence of the duty, that all the efficacy and vio-
of it be employed against the strongest, and
where is the most dangerous hostility.

Fourthly, But if we mean to be masters of
eld, and put our victory past dispute, let us
fy our morosity and natural aversations, re-
g them to an indifferency, having in our wills
ndnesses, in our spirits no faction of persons
tions, being prepared to love all men, and to
re all things, and to undertake all employ-
s which are duty or counsel, in all circum-
es or disadvantages. For the excellency of
gelical sanctity does surmount all antipathies,
essel climbs up and rides upon a wave. 'The
and the lamb shall cohabit, and a child shall
and put his fingers in the cavern of the as-

Nations whose interests are most contradic-
must be knit by the confederations of a morti-
and a Christian spirit, and single persons must
aph over the difficulties of an indisposed na-
; or else their own will is unmortified, and na-
is stronger than can well consist with the
nion and absolute empire of grace. To this I
ce such peevish and unhandsome nicenesses in
ers of religion, that are unsatisfied unless they

all exterior circumstances trimmed up and
; pompous for their religious offices; such
cannot pray without a convenient room, and
devotion is made active only by a well-built
el, and they cannot sing lauds without church-
c, and too much light dissolves their intention,
too much dark promotes their melancholy:

and because these and the like exterior ministries are good advantages, therefore without them they can do nothing; which certainly is a great intimation and likeness of immortification. Our will should be like the candle of the eye, without all colour in itself, that it may entertain the species of all colours from without: and when we lust after mandrakes and deliciousness of exterior ministries, we many times are brought to betray our own interest, and prostitute our dearest affections to more ignoble and stranger desires. Let us love all natures, and serve all persons, and pray in all places, and fast without opportunities, and do alms above our power, and set ourselves heartily on work, to neglect and frustrate those lower temptations of the devil, who will frequently enough make our religion inopportune, if we then will make it infrequent: and will present us with objects enough and flies to disquiet our persons, if our natures be petulant, peevish, curious, and unmortified.

24. It is a great mercy of God to have an affable, sweet, and well-disposed nature, and it does half the work of mortification for us; we have the less trouble to subdue our passions, and destroy our lusts. But then, as those whose natures are morose, choleric, and peevish, and lustful have greater difficulty, so is their virtue of greater excellence, and returned with a more ample reward. But it is in all men's natures as with them who gathered manna, 'They that gathered little had no lack, and they that gathered much had nothing over:' they who are of ill natures shall want no assistance of God's grace to work their cure, though their flesh be longer healing; and they who are

rectly tempered, being naturally meek and modest, chaste or temperate, will find work enough to contest against their temptations from without, though from within possibly they may have fewer. Yet there are greater degrees of virtue and heroical excellencies, and great rewards to which God hath assigned them by so fair dispositions; and it will concern all their industry to mortify their spirit, which though it be malleable and more ductile, yet is as bare and naked of imagery as the rudest and most iron nature. So that mortification will be every man's duty: no nature, nor piety, nor wisdom, nor perfection but will need it, either to subdue a lust, or a passion; to cut off an occasion, to resist a temptation; to persevere, or to go on; to secure our present estate, or to proceed towards perfection. But all men do not think so.

25. For there are some who have great peace, no fightings within, no troubles without, no disputes or contradictions in their spirit. But these men have the peace of tributaries or a conquered people; the gates of their city stand open day and night, that all the carriages may enter without disputing the pass: the flesh and the spirit dispute not, because the spirit is there in pupilage or in bonds, and the flesh rides in triumph, with the tyranny, and pride, and impotency of a female tyrant. For in the sense of religion we all are warriors or slaves: either ourselves are stark dead in excesses and sins, or we need to stand perpetually upon our guards in continual observation, and contestation against our lusts and our passions; long denying and contradicting our own wills, though we will and choose to do things against our

wills, having an eye always to those infinite satisfactions which shall glorify our wills and all our faculties, when we arrive to that state in which there shall be no more contradiction, but only that our mortal shall put on immortality.

26. But as some have a vain and dangerous peace, so others double their trouble by too many and impertinent scruples, thinking that every temptation is a degree of immortification. As long as we live, we shall have to do with enemies. But as this life is ever a state of imperfection, the very design and purpose of mortification is not to take away temptations, but to overcome them: it endeavours to facilitate the work, and to cure our condition, by removing all occasions of sin; but the opportunity of a crime and the solicitation to a sin is no fault of ours, unless it be our procuring, or finds entertainment when it comes unsent for. To suffer a temptation, is misery; but if we then set upon the mortification of it, it is an occasion of virtue; and never is criminal unless we give consent. But then it would be considered, that it is not good to offer ourselves to fire ordeal, to confirm our innocence nor prudent to enter into battle without need, and show our valour; nor safe to procure a temptation that we may have the reward of mortification of it. For mortification of the spirit is not commanded as a duty finally resting in itself, or immediately landing upon God's glory, such as are acts of charity and devotion, chastity and justice; but it is the great instrument of humility and all other graces: and therefore is to be undertaken to destroy a sin, and to secure a virtuous habit. A

Besides that to call on a danger is to tempt God, and to invite the devil,¹ (and no man is sure of a victory,) it is also great imprudence to create a need, that we may take it away again; to drink poison to make experiment of the antidote: and at the best, it is but running back, to come just to the same place again. For he that is not tempted, does not sin; but he that invites a temptation, that he might overcome it, or provokes a passion, that he may allay it, is then but in the same condition, after his pains and his danger. He was not sure he should come so far.

THE PRAYER.

O dearest God, who hast framed man of soul and body, and fitted him with faculties and proportionable instruments to serve thee according to all our capacities, let thy Holy Spirit rule and sanctify every power and member both of soul and body, that they may keep that beauteous order which in our creation thou didst intend, and to which thou dost restore thy people in the renovations of grace; that our affections may be guided by reason, our understanding may be enlightened with thy word, and then may guide and persuade our will; that we suffer no violent transportation of passions, nor be overcome by a temptation, nor consent to the impure solicitations of lust; that sin may not reign in our mortal bodies, but that both bodies and souls may be conformable to the sufferings of the holy Jesus; that in our body we may bear the marks and dying of our Lord, and in our spirits we may be humble and mortified, and like him in all his imitable perfections; that we may die to sin, and live to righteousness; and after our suffering together with him in this world, we may reign together with him hereafter. To whom, in the unity of the most mysterious Trinity, be all glory and dominion and praise for ever and ever. Amen.

¹ *Vide Disc. of Temptation.*

SECTION XI.

(Of Jesus being Baptized, and going into the Wilderness to be tempted.

1. Now the full time was come, Jesus took leave of his mother and his trade, to begin his father's work, and the office prophetic, in order to the redemption of the world : and when ' John was baptizing in Jordan, Jesus came to John to be baptized of him.' The Baptist had never seen his face, because they had been from their infancy driven to several places, designed to several employments, and never met till now. But immediately the Holy Ghost inspired St. John with a discerning and knowing spirit, and at his first arrival he knew him, and did him worship. And when Jesus desired to be baptized, ' John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me ?' For the baptism of John, although it was not a direct instrument of the Spirit for the collation of grace, neither find we it administered in any form of words, not so much as in the name of Christ to come, as many dream :¹ (because even after John had baptized, the Pharisees still doubted if he were the Messiah; which they would not, if in his form of ministration he had published Christ to come after him; and also because it had not been proper for Christ himself to have received that baptism whose form had specified himself to come hereafter; neither would it consist with the revelation which John had, and the confession

¹ Gabriel Sotus, Scotus, &c.

which he made, to baptize in the name of Christ to come, whom the Spirit marked out to him to be come already, and himself pointed at him with his finger :) yet it was a ceremonious consignation of the doctrine of repentance, which was one great part of the covenant evangelical, and was a divine institution;¹ the susception of it was in order to be fulfilling all righteousness; it was a sign of humility, the persons baptized confessed their sins; it was a sacramental disposing to the baptism and faith of Christ. But therefore John wondered why the Messiah, the Lamb of God, pure and without spot, who needed not the abstersions of repentance, or the washings of baptism, should demand it, and of him a sinner, and his servant. And in the Hebrew gospel of St. Matthew which the Nazarenes used at Berœa, (as St. Jerome reports,) these words are added: ‘The mother of the Lord and his brethren said unto him, John Baptist baptizeth to the remission of sins, let us go and be baptized of him. He said unto them, What have I sinned, that I should go and be baptized of him?’² And this part of the story is also told by Justin Martyr.³ But Jesus wanted not a proposition to consign by his baptism proportionable enough to the analogy of its institution: for as others professed their return towards innocence, so he avowed his perseverance in it. And though he was never called in Scripture a sinner, yet he was made sin for us; that is, he did undergo the shame and the punishment; and therefore it was proper enough for him to perform the sacrament of sinners.

2. But the holy Jesus, who came (as himself, in

¹ Acts xix. 4. προοίμιον τῷ ἐναγγελίᾳ τῆς χάριτος.

² Quæst. ad Orthod. 73.

³ Dial. iii. advers. Pelag.

answer to the Baptist's question, professed) to all righteousness, would receive that rite which Father had instituted in order to the manifestation of his Son.¹ For although the Baptist had a glimpse of him by the first irradiations of the Spirit, yet John professed, that he therefore came baptizing with water, that 'Jesus might be manifested to Israel;' and it was also a sign given to the Baptist himself, that 'on whomsoever he saw the Spirit descending and remaining,' he is the person 'that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.' And Jesus chose to actuate the design at the waters of Jordan in great and religious assemblies convened there for John's baptism; and therefore Jesus came to be baptized, and by this baptism became known to John; who as before he gave to him an indistinct testimony, so now he pointed out the person in his sermons and discourses, and by calling him the Lamb of God,² prophesied of his passion and death, preached him to be the world's redeemer, and sacrifice for mankind. He was now manifested to Israel; he confirmed the baptism of John, sanctified the water to become sacramental and ministerial in the remission of sins; he by this event declared, that to them who should rightly be baptized, the kingdom of heaven should certainly be opened; he inserted himself by that ceremony into the society and participation of holy people, of which communion himself was head and principle, and he did in a symbol purify human nature from whose stains and guilt he had undertaken.

3. As soon as John had performed his mission, and Jesus was baptized, he prayed, and

¹ Clem. Constit. Apost. lib. vii. c. 23.

² Symbolum supplicii crucis. Just. Mart.

avens were opened, and the air clarified by a w and glorious light,¹ and the Holy Ghost in a manner of a dove alighted upon his sacred ad, and God the Father gave a voice from aven, saying, 'Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' This was the inauguration and proclamation of the Messiah, when he began to be the great prophet of the new covenant. And this was the greatest meeting that ever was upon earth, where the whole cabinet of the mysterious Trinity was opened and shown, as much as the capacities of our present imperfections will admit; the second person in the veil of humanity; the third in the shape, or with the motion of a dove;² but the first kept his primitive state: and to the Israelites he gave notice, by way of caution, 'Ye saw no shape, but ye heard a voice;' now also God the Father gave testimony to his holy Son, and appeared only in a voice, without any visible representment.

4. When the rite and the solemnity was over, Christ ascended up out of the waters,' and left so much virtue behind him, that, as Gregorius Turonensis reports, that creek of the river where his holy body had been baptized was indued with a healing quality, and a power of curing lepers that bathed themselves in those waters, in the faith and with invocation of the holy name of Jesus.³ But the manifestation of this power was not till afterwards, for as yet Jesus did no miracles.

5. As soon as ever the Saviour of the world was baptized, had opened the heavens, which yet never

¹ Καὶ ἐνθὺς περιέλαμψε τὸν τόπον φῶς μέγα. Evang. Ebion.

² Ὡσεὶ περιτεράν. Mat. iii. 16; Mark. i. 10. ἐν σωματικῷ ἵδει. Luke iii. 22.

³ Cap. 17. de gloria Martyr.

had been opened to man, and was declared the Son of God, 'Jesus was by the Spirit driven into the wilderness;' not by an unnatural violence, but by the efficacies of inspiration, and a supernatural inclination and activity of resolution: for it was the Holy Spirit that bare him thither; he was led by the good Spirit to be tempted by the evil. Whither also he was pleased to retire, to make demonstration that even in an active life, such as he was designed to and intended, some recesses and temporary dismissions of the world are most expedient, for such persons especially whose office is prophetic; and for institution of others, that by such vacancies in prayer and contemplation they may be better enabled to teach others, when they have in such retirements conversed with God.

6. In the desert, which was four miles from the place of his baptism, and about twenty miles from Jerusalem, as the common computations are, he did abide 'forty days and forty nights;' where he was perpetually disturbed and assaulted with evil spirits, in the midst of wild beasts, in a continual fast, without eating bread or drinking water. 'And the angels ministered to him,' being messengers of comfort and sustentation sent from his Father for the support and service of his humanity, and employed in resisting and discountenancing the assaults and temporal hostilities of the spirits of darkness.

7. Whether the devils appeared in any horrid and affrighting shapes, is not certain; but it is more likely, to a person of so great sanctity and high designation they would appear more angelical and immaterial, in representations intellectual, in words and ideas, temptations and enticements; because

Jesus was not a person of those low weaknesses to be frightened or troubled with an ugly phantasm, which can do nothing but abuse the weak and imperfect conceptions of persons nothing extraordinary. And this was the way which Satan or the prince of the evils took, whose temptations were reserved for the last assault, and the great day of trial. For at the expiration of his forty days, Jesus being hungry, the tempter invited him only to eat bread of his own providing, which might refresh his humanity, and prove his divinity; hoping that his hunger, and the desire of convincing the devil, might tempt him to eat before the time appointed. But Jesus answered, 'It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God:' meaning, that in every word of God, whether the commandment be general or special, a promise is either expressed or implied of the supply of all provisions necessary for him that is doing the work of God. And that was the present case of Jesus, who was then doing his Father's work, and promoting our interest, and therefore was sure to be provided for; and therefore so are we.

8. The devil, having failed in this assault, tries him again, requiring but a demonstration of his being the Son of God. He sets him upon the battlement of the temple,¹ and invites him to 'throw himself down,' upon a pretence that 'God would send his angels' to keep his Son; and quotes Scripture for it. But Jesus understood it well; and though he was secured of God's protection, yet he could not tempt God, nor solicit his Providence to

¹ Πτερόγιον, ἀκρωτήριο, τὸ ἐπάνω τῶν ναῶν ἀνατιθέμενον ζώδιον.

a dereliction, by tempting him to an unnecessary conservation. This assault was silly and weak. But at last he unites all his power of stratagem, and places the holy Jesus 'upon an exceeding high mountain,' and by an angelical power draws into one centre species and ideas from all the kingdoms and glories of the world,¹ and makes an admirable map of beauties, and represents it to the eyes of Jesus, saying, that all that was put into his power to give, and he 'would give it him, if he would fall down and worship him.' But then the holy Lamb was angry as a provoked lion, and commanded him away, when his temptations were violent,^f and his demands impudent and blasphemous. 'Then the devil leaveth him, and the angels came and ministered unto him,' bringing such things as his necessities required; after he had, by a forty-days' fast, done penance for our sins, and consigned to his church the doctrine and discipline of fasting in order to a contemplative life, and the resisting and overcoming all the temptations and allurements of the devil, and all our ghostly enemies.

AD. SECTION IX.

Considerations upon the Baptizing, Fasting, and Temptation of the holy Jesus by the Devil.

1. WHEN the day did break, and the Baptist was busy in his offices, the Sun of righteousness soon entered upon our hemisphere: and after he had lived a life of darkness and silence for thirty

¹ Φαινόμενα ἐν τῷ ἄερὶ φαντάσματα ἅπαντα ὄντα ἐ ἀβύ-
βαια.

rs together, yet now that he came to do the
 atest work in the world, and to minister in the
 st honourable embassy, he would do nothing of
 gularity, but ‘fulfil all righteousness,’ and satis-
 all commands, and join in the common rites
 l sacraments, which all people, innocent or peni-
 t, did undergo, either as deleteries of sin or
 truments of grace. For so he would needs be
 rtized by his servant: and though he was of
 ity sufficient to do it, and did actually by his
 tism purify the purifier, and sanctify that and
 other streams to a holy ministry and effect; yet
 went in, bowing his head like a sinner, uncloth-
 ; himself like an imperfect person, and craving to
 washed, as if he had been crusted with an
 pure leprosy. Thereby teaching us to submit
 selves to all those rites which he would insti-
 e: and although some of them be, like the bap-
 n of John, joined with confession of sins, and
 blication of our infirmities; yet it were better for
 to lay by our loads, and wash our ulcers, than by
 icealing them, out of vainer desires of imperti-
 nt reputation, cover our disease till we are heart-
 k and die. But when so holy a person does all
 pious ministries of the more imperfect, it is a de-
 monstration to us, that a life common and ordinary,
 thout affectation or singularity, is the most pru-
 nt and safe. Every great change, every violence
 fortune, all eminences and unevennesses what-
 ever, whether of person or accident or circum-
 nce, put us to a new trouble, require a distinct
 re, create new dangers, object more temptations,
 rk us out the object of envy, make our standing
 ore insecure, and our fall more contemptible and
 liculous. But an even life, spent with as much

rigour of duty to God as ought to be, yet in the same manner of devotions, in the susception of ordinary offices, in bearing public burdens, frequenting public assemblies, performing offices of civility, receiving all the rites of an established religion, complying with national customs and hereditary solemnities of a people, in nothing disquieting public peace, or disrelishing the great instruments of an innocent communion, or dissolving the circumstantial ligaments of charity, or breaking laws, and the great relations and necessitudes of the world, out of fancy or singularity, is the best way to live holily, and safely, and happily; safer from sin and envy, and more removed from trouble and temptation.

2. When Jesus came to John to be baptized, John, out of humility and modesty, refused him; but when Jesus, by reduplication of his desire, fortifying it with a command, made it in the Baptist to become a duty, then he obeyed. And so also did the primitive clerks refuse to do offices of great dignity and highest ministry, looking through the honour upon the danger, and passing by the dignity they considered the charge of the cure, and knew that the eminency of the office was in all senses insecure to the person; till by command and peremptory injunction of their superiors it was put past a dispute, and became necessary, and that either they must perish instantly in the ruins and precipices of disobedience, or put it to the hazard and a fair venture for a brighter crown or a bigger damnation. I wish also this care were entailed and did descend upon all ages of the church. For the ambitious seeking of dignities and prelacies ecclesiastical is grown the pest of the church, and corrupts

salt itself, and extinguishes the lights, and es too apparent evidences to the world, that nei-
 r the end is pure, nor the intention sanctified,
 the person innocent; but the purpose ambi-
 is or covetous, and the person vicious, and the
 y entrance into church-offices is with an impure
 ch and a foul hand, or an heart empty of the
 actions of religion, or thoughts of doing God's
 rk. I do not think the present age is to be
 ated with concerning denying to accept rich
 lacies and pompous dignities: but it were but
 sonable that the main intention and intellectual
 ign should be to appreciate and esteem the
 ce and employment to be of greatest considera-
 a. It is lawful to desire a bishopric; neither
 the unwillingness to accept it be, in a prudent
 count, adjudged the aptest disposition to receive
 (especially if done in ceremony,¹ just in the in-
 nt of their entertainment of it, and possibly after
 ong ambition;) but yet it were well if we re-
 mber that such desires must be sanctified with
 ly care and diligence in the office. For the ho-
 y is guarded with thousands of little sharp stings
 d dangers; and it will be a sad account, if we
 called to audit for the crimes of our diocess
 er our own tallies are made even: and he that
 lieves his own load to be big enough, and trem-
 es at the apprehension of the horrors of dooms-
 y, is not very wise if he takes up those burdens
 ick he sees have crushed their bearers, and
 esses his own shoulders till the bones crack,
 ly because the bundles are wrapped in white
 en, and bound with silken cords. ' He that de-

¹ *In Pontifical. Rom.*

sires the office of a bishop desires a good work; saith St. Paul; and therefore we must not look on it for the fair-spreading sails and the beauteous streamers which the favour of princes hath put to it, to make it sail fairer and more secure against the dangers of secular discomforts, but upon the burden it bears. Prelacy is a good work; and a good work well done is very honourable, and shall be rewarded: but he that considers the infinite dangers of miscarrying, and that the loss of the ship will be imputed to the pilot, may think it many times the safest course to put God or his superiors to the charge of a command, before he undertakes such great ministries. And he that enters in by the force of authority, as he himself receives a testimony of his worth and aptness to the employment, so he gives the world another, that his search for it was not criminal, nor his person immodest; and by his weighty apprehension of his dangers he will consider his work, and obtain a grace to do it diligently, and to be accepted graciously. And this was the modesty and prudence of the Baptist.

3. Jesus 'was baptized, he prayed, and the heavens were opened.' External rites of divine institution receive benediction and energy from above, but it is by the mediation of prayer.¹ For there is nothing ritual, but it is also joined with something moral, and required on our part in all persons capable of the use of reason, that we may understand that the blessings of religion are works and graces too: God therefore requiring us to do something, not that we may glory in it, but

¹ 1 Cor. x. 1, &c.; Gal. iii. 14, 27; 1 Pet. iii. 21; 1 Cor. xii. 7, 13; Matth. iii. 2, 6.

that we may estimate the grace, and go to God for it in the means of his own hallowing. Naaman had been stupid, if, when the prophet bad him wash seven times in Jordan for his cure, he had not confessed the cure to be wrought by the God of Israel and the ministry of his prophet, but had made himself the author, because of his obedience to the enjoined condition: and it is but a weak fancy to derogate from God's grace, and the glory and the freedom of it, because he bids us wash before we are cleansed, and pray when we are washed, and commands us to ask before we shall receive. But this also is true from this instance, that the external rite of sacrament is so instrumental in a spiritual grace, that it never does it but with the conjunction of something moral. And this truth is of so great persuasion in the Greek church, that the mystery of consecration in the venerable eucharist is amongst them attributed not to any mystical words and secret operations of syllables, but to the efficacy of the prayers of the church, in the just imitation of the whole action and the rite of institution.¹ And the purpose of it is, that we might secure the excellency and holiness of such predispositions and concomitant graces, which are necessary to the worthy and effectual susception of the external rites of Christianity.

4. After the holy Jesus was baptized, and had prayed, the heavens opened,² the Holy Ghost descended, and a voice from heaven proclaimed

¹ Justin Mart. Apol. ii. Euseb. Emis. Serm. 5. de Pasch. S. August. lib. iii. c. 4. de Trin.

² Quòd Christus vidit cœlos apertos, nostrî utique gratiâ factum est, quibus per lavacrum undæ regeneratricis janua panditur regni cœlestis. Beda in Matt. l. i. c. l.

him to be the Son of God, and one in whom the Father was well pleased. And the same ointment that was cast upon the head of our high-priest, 'went unto his beard,' and thence 'fell to the borders of his garment:' for as Christ our head felt these effects in manifestation, so the church believes God does to her and to her meanest children in the susception of the holy rite of baptism in right, apt, and holy dispositions. For the heavens open too upon us, and the Holy Ghost descends to sanctify the waters, and to hallow the catechumen, and to pardon the past and repented sins, and to consign him to the inheritance of sons, and to put on his military girdle, and give him the sacrament and oath of fidelity. For all this is understood to be meant by those frequent expressions of Scripture, calling baptism 'the laver of regeneration, illumination, a washing away the filth of the flesh, and the answer of a good conscience, a being buried with Christ,' and many others of the like purpose and signification. But we may also learn hence sacredly to esteem the rites of religion, which he first sanctified by his own personal susception, and then made necessary by his own institution and command, and God hath made to be conveyances of blessing and ministries of the Holy Spirit.

5. The Holy Ghost descended upon Jesus in the manner or visible representment of a dove: either in similitude or figure, which he was pleased to assume, as the church more generally hath believed; or at least he did descend like a dove, and in his robe of fire hovered over the Baptist's head,

¹ Eph. v. 26; Heb. x. 32; 1 Pet. iii. 21; Rom. vi. 4.

and then sate upon him, as the dove uses to sit upon the house of her dwelling; whose proprieties of nature are pretty and modest hieroglyphics of the duty of spiritual persons, which are thus observed in both philosophies. The dove sings not, but mourns; it hath no gall,¹ strikes not with its bill, hath no crooked talons, and forgets its young ones soonest of any of the inhabitants of the air. And the effects of the Holy Spirit are symbolical in all the sons of sanctification. For the voice of the church is sad in those accents which express her own condition. But as the dove is not so sad in her breast as in her note; so neither is the interior condition of the church wretched and miserable; but indeed her song is most of it elegy within her own walls, and her condition looks sad, and her joys are not pleasures in the public estimate, but they that afflict her, think her miserable, because they know not the sweetnesses of a holy peace and serenity which supports her spirit, and plains the heart under a rugged brow, making the soul festival under the noise of a threne and sadder groanings. But the sons of consolation are also taught their duty by this apparition: for upon whomsoever the Spirit descends, he teaches him to be meek, and charitable, neither offending by the violence of hands, or looser language. For the dove is inoffensive in beak and foot, and feels no disturbance and violence of passions when its dearest interests are destroyed: that we also may be of an even spirit in the saddest accidents, which usually discompose our peace. And however such symbolical intimations receive their efficacy from

¹ *Scil. in hepate : habet autem in intestino.*

the fancy of the contriver, yet here, whether this apparition did intend any such moral representment or no, it is certain, that wherever the Holy Spirit does dwell, there also peace and sanctity, meekness and charity, a mortified will and an active dereliction of our desires do inhabit. But besides this hieroglyphical representment, this dove, like that which Noah sent out from the ark, did aptly signify the world to be renewed, and all to be turned to a new creation, and God hath made a new covenant with us, that, unless we provoke him, he will never destroy us any more.

6. No sooner had the voice of God pronounced Jesus to be the well-beloved Son of God, but the devil thought it of great concernment to attempt him with all his malice and his art: and that is the condition of all those whom God's grace hath separated from the common expectations and societies of the world. And therefore the son of Sirach gave good advice: 'My son, if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul for temptation.'¹ For not only the spirits of darkness are exasperated at the declension of their own kingdom; but also the nature and constitution of virtues and eminent graces, which holy persons exercise in their lives, is such as is to be easily assailable by their contraries, apt to be lessened by time, to be interrupted by weariness, to grow fat and insipid by tediousness of labour, to be omitted and grow infrequent by the impertinent diversions of society and secular occasions: so that to rescind the ligaments of vice, made firm by nature and evil habits, to acquire every new degree of virtue, to

¹ Eccclus. ii. 1.

continue the holy fires of zeal in their just proportion, to overcome the devil, and to reject the invitations of the world, and the softer embraces of the flesh, which are the proper employment of the sons of God, is a perpetual difficulty, and every possibility of prevaricating the strictness of a duty is a temptation, and an insecurity to them who have begun to serve God in hard battles.

7. The Holy Spirit did drive Jesus into the wilderness, to be tempted by the devil. And though we are bound to pray instantly that we fall into no temptation; yet if, by divine permission, or by an inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we be engaged in an action or course of life that is full of temptation and empty of comfort, let us apprehend it as an issue of divine Providence, as an occasion of the rewards of diligence and patience, as an instrument of virtue, as a designation of that way in which we must glorify God; but no argument of disfavour, since our dearest Lord, the most Holy Jesus, who could have driven the devil away by the breath of his mouth, yet was by the Spirit of his Father permitted to a trial and molestation by the spirits of darkness. And this is St. James's counsel: 'My brethren, count it all joy when ye enter into divers temptations, knowing that the trial of your faith worketh patience.'¹ So far it is a blessing, when the Spirit is the instrument of our motion, and brings us to the trial of our faith: but if the Spirit leaves us, and delivers us over to the devil, not to be tempted, but to be abused and ruined, it is a sad condition, and the greatest instance of their infelicity whom the church, upon

¹ James, i. 2, 3.

sufficient reason and with competent authority, delivers over to Satan, by the infliction of the greater excommunication.

8. As soon as it was permitted to the devil to tempt our Lord, he, like fire, had no power to suspend his act, but was as entirely determined by the fulness of his malice as a natural agent by the appetites of nature: that we may know to whom we owe the happinesses of all those hours and days of peace in which we sit under the trees of Paradise, and see no serpent encircling the branches and presenting us with fair fruit to ruin us. It is the mercy of God we have the quietness of a minute; for if the devil's chain were taken off, he would make our very beds a torment, our tables to be a snare, our sleeps fantastic, lustful, and illusive, and every sense should have an object of delight and danger, an hyæna to kiss, and to perish in its embraces. But the holy Jesus having been assaulted by the devil, and felt his malice by the experiments of humanity, is become so merciful a high-priest, and so sensible of our sufferings and danger, by the apprehensions of compassion, that he hath put a hook into the nostrils of a leviathan: and although the relics of seven nations be in our borders and fringes of our country, yet we live as safe as did the Israelites, upon whom sometimes an inroad and invasion was made, and sometimes they had rest forty years; and when the storm came, some remedy was found out by his grace by whose permission the tempest was stirred up. And we find many persons who in seven years meet not with a violent temptation to a crime, but their battles are against impediments and retardations of improvement: their own rights are not directly

uestioned, but the devil and sin are wholly upon
 ie defensive. Our duty here is an act of affection
 o God, making returns of thanks for the protec-
 on, and of duty to secure and continue the fa-
 our.

9. But the design of the Holy Ghost being to
 xpose Jesus to the temptation, he arms himself
 ith fasting, and prayer, and baptism, and the
 oly Spirit, against the day of battle. He con-
 nues in the wilderness forty days and forty nights
 ithout meat or drink, attending to the immediate
 ddresses and colloquies with God, not suffering
 ie interruption of meals, but representing his
 wn and the necessities of all mankind with such
 fections and instances of spirit, love, and wisdom
 s might express the excellency of his person, and
 romote the work of our redemption: his conver-
 sation being in this interval but a resemblance of
 ngelical perfection, and his fasts not an instru-
 ent of mortification,¹ for he needed none, he had
 ontracted no stain from his own nor his parents'
 ts; neither do we find that he was at all angry,
 r afflicted with his abstinence, till after the ex-
 iration of forty days. 'He was afterwards an
 ungry,' saith the evangelist; and his abstinence
 om meat might be a defecation of his faculties,
 id an opportunity of prayer; but we are not sure
 intended any thing else. But it may concern
 e prudence of religion, to snatch at this occasion
 duty, so far as the instance is imitable, and in all
 plences of temptation to fast and pray; prayer
 ing a rare antidote against the poison, and fast-
 ; a convenient disposition to intense, actual, and

¹ Cyril. Hieros. Catech. iii.

undisturbed prayer.¹ And we may remember also that we have been baptized, and consigned with the Spirit of God, and have received the adoption of sons, and the graces of sanctification in our baptisms, and had then the seed of God put into us, and then we put on Christ, and entering into battle put on the whole armour of righteousness; and therefore we may, by observing our strength, gather also our duty and greatest obligation, to fight manfully, that we may triumph gloriously.

10. The devil's first temptation of Christ was upon the instances and first necessities of nature. Christ was hungry, and the devil invited him to break his fast upon the expense of a miracle, by turning the stones into bread. But the answer Jesus made was such as taught us, since the ordinary providence of God is sufficient for our provision or support, extraordinary ways of satisfying necessities are not to be undertaken; but God must be relied upon, his time attended, his manner entertained, and his measure thankfully received. Jesus refused to be relieved, and denied to manifest the divinity of his person, rather than he would do an act which had in it the intimation of a diffident spirit, or might be expounded a disreputation to God's providence. And therefore it is an improvident care and impious security to take evil courses and use vile instruments to furnish our table, and provide for our necessities. God will certainly give us bread; and till he does, we can live by the breath of his mouth, by the word of God, by the light of his countenance, by the refreshment of his promises. For if God gives not provisions into our

¹ Nazianz. Orat. in S. Bapt.

granaries, he can feed us out of his own, that is, out of the repositories of charity; if the flesh-pots be removed, he can also alter the appetite; and when our stock is spent, he can also lessen the necessity: or if that continues, he can drown the sense of it in a deluge of patience and resignation. Every word of God's mouth can create a grace, and every grace can supply two necessities, both of the body and the spirit; by the comforts of this to support that, that they may bear each other's burden, and alleviate the pressure.

11. But the devil is always prompting us to change our stones into bread, or sadnesses into sensual comfort, our drynesses into inundations of fancy and exterior sweetnesses: for he knows that the ascetic tables of mortification and the stones of the desert, are more healthful than the fulnesses of voluptuousness and the corn of the valleys. He cannot endure we should live a life of austerity or self-denial. If he can get us but to satisfy our senses, and a little more freely to please our natural desires, he then hath a fair field for the battle: but so long as we force him to fight in hedges, and morasses, encircling and crowding up his strengths into disadvantages, by our stone-walls, our hardnesses of discipline and rudenesses of mortification, we can with more facility repel his flatteries, and receive fewer incommodities of spirit. But thus the devil will abuse us by the impotency of our natural desires; and therefore let us go to God for satisfaction of our wishes. God can, and does, when it is good for us, change our stones into bread: for he is a Father so merciful, that if 'we ask him a fish, he will not give us a scorpion; if we ask him bread, he will not offer us a stone;' but will satisfy

all our desires by ministrations of the Spirit, making stones to become our meat, and tears our drink: which although they are unpleasant and harsh to natural appetites; yet by the operation and influences of God's Holy Spirit they are made instruments of health, and life, and salvation.

12. The devil perceiving Jesus to be a person of greater eminency and perfection than to be moved by sensual and low desires, makes a second assault, by a temptation something more spiritual, and tempts him to presumption and indiscreet confidence, to a throwing himself down from the pinnacles of the temple, upon the stock of predestination, that God might secure him by the ministry of angels, and so prove his being the Son of God. And indeed it is usual with the devil, when severe persons have so much mortified their lower appetites that they are not easily overcome by an invitation of carnality or intemperance, to stir them to opinions of their own sanctity, and make their first escapings prove their second and greater dangers. But that the devil should persuade Jesus to throw himself down because he was the Son of God, was an invitation to no purpose, save only that it gave occasion to this truth, that God's providence secures all his sons in the ways of nature, and while they are doing their duty; but loves not to be tempted to acts unreasonable and unnecessary. God will protect his servants in or from all evils happening without their knowledge, or against their will; but not from evils of their own procuring. Heron, an inhabitant of the desert, suffered the same temptation, and was overcome by it; for he died with his fall, sinfully and ingloriously. For the caresses of God's love to his saints and servants are security

against all but themselves. The devil and all the world offer to do them mischief; but then they shall be safe, because they are innocent: if they once offer to do the same to themselves, they lose their protection, because they lost their prudence and their charity. But here also it will concern all those who, by their eminent employment and greater ministries in ecclesiasticals, are set upon the pinnacle of the temple, to take care that the devil tempt not them to a precipice; a fall from so great a height will break the bones in pieces: and yet there also the station is less firm, the posture most uneasy, the prospect vertiginous, and the devil busy and desirous to thrust us headlong.

13. St. Jerome here observes well, the devil intending mischief to our blessed Saviour, invited him to cast himself down.¹ He may persuade us to a fall, but cannot precipitate us without our own act. And it is an infinite mercy in God, that the devil, who is of malice infinite, is of so restrained and limited a power, that he can do us no ghostly disadvantage, but by persuading us to do it ourselves. And then it will be a strange imprudence, to lay violent and unreasonable hands on ourselves, and do that mischief which our strongest and most malicious adversary cannot; or to be invited by the only rhetoric of a dog's barking, to come near him, to untie his chain, to unloose his muzzle, for no other end but that we may be bitten. Just such a fool is every person that consents to the temptations of the devil.

14. By this time the devil began to perceive that this was the Son of God, and designed to be the

¹ *S. Hieron. in iv. cap. Matt.*

King of all the world, and therefore resolved for the last assault to proffer him the kingdoms of the world; thinking ambition more likely to ruin him, because he knew it was that which prevailed upon himself, and all those fallen stars, the angels of darkness. That the devil told a lie it is most likely, when he said he had power to dispose the kingdoms of the world; for originally and by proper inherent right God alone disposes all governments. But it is also certain, that the devil is a person capable of a delegate employment in some great mutation of states: and many probabilities have been observed by wise personages, persuading that the grandeur of the Roman empire was, in the degrees of increment and decrement, permitted to the power and managing of the devil; that the greatness of that government, being in all appearance full of advantage to Satan's kingdom, and employed for the disimprovement of the weak beginnings and improbable increase of Christianity, might give lustre and demonstration to it that it came from God, since the great permissions of power made to the devil, and acted with all art and malice in defiance of the religion, could produce no other effect upon it but that it made it grow greater; and the greatness was made more miraculous, since the devil, when his chain was off, said would, but could not suppress it.

15. The Lamb of God, that heard him with patience tempt him to do himself a mischief, and to throw himself headlong, could by no means endure it when he tempted to a direct dishonouring of God. Our own injuries are opportunities of patience: but when the glory of God and his immediate honour is the question, then is the occasion and precise

route for the flames of a clear-shining and unconquering zeal. But the care of God's glory had so seduced and employed all the faculties of Jesus, that he takes no notice of the offer: and it were well to that we had fewer opinions of the lustre of worldly dignities; or at least, that we, in imitation of our blessed Master, should refuse to accept all the world, when it is to be bought of the devil at the expense of a deadly sin. For that government cannot be very honourable that makes us slaves to the worst of tyrants: and all those princes and great personages who by injury and usurpation oppress and invade others' rights, would do well to consider, that a kingdom is too dearly paid for, if the condition be first to worship the devil.

16. When the devil could do no good, he departed for a time. If he could ever have spied a chance of returning, he wanted not will nor malice to observe and use it. And although Jesus was a Son without danger; yet I doubt not but the Holy Ghost described that circumstance, that we should not have the securities of a deep peace when we have had the success of conquerors; for a surfeit is most full of horror, and of more certain ruin; so that we have no security, but a perpetual preservation: that, together with the grace of God, who takes care of all his servants, and will drive away the tempter when he pleases, and help us in all ways when we need,) is as great an argument for our confidence, and encouragement to our prayers and address to God, as it is safety to our person, and honour to our victory. And let us account it a great honour that the trials of temptation, which is the greatest sadness of our condition, are hallowed by the temptation of Jesus, and our condition as-

sured by his assistances, and the assistances procured by our prayers most easily upon the advantage of his sufferings and compassion. And we may observe that poverty, predestination, and ambition are the three quivers from which the devil drew his arrows, which (as the most likely to prevail) he shot against Christ. But now he shot in vain, and gave probation that he might be overcome: our captain hath conquered for himself and us. By these instances we see our danger, and how we are provided of a remedy.

THE PRAYER.

O holy Jesus, who didst fulfil all righteousness, and didst live a life of evenness, and obedience, and community, submitting thyself to all rites and sanctions of divine ordinance; give me grace to live in the fellowship of thy holy church, a life of piety, and without singularity, receiving the sweet influence of thy sacraments and rites, and living in the purities and innocencies of my first sanctification. I adore thy goodness infinite, that thou hast been pleased to wash my soul in the laver of regeneration, that thou hast consigned me to the participation of thy favours by the holy eucharist. Let me not return to the infirmities of the old man, whom thou hast crucified on thy cross, and who was buried with thee in baptism; nor renew the crimes of my sinful years, which were so many recessions from baptismal purities; but let me ever receive the emissions of thy Divine Spirit, and be a son of God, a partner of thine immortal inheritance; and when thou seest it needful, let me receive testimony from heaven, that I am thy servant and thy child. And grant that I may so walk, that I neither disrepute the honour of the Christian institution, nor stain the whitenesses of that innocence which thou didst invest my soul withal when I put on the baptismal robe, nor break my holy vow, nor lose my right of inheritance which thou hast given me by promise and grace: but that thou mayest love me with the love of a father, and a brother.

and a husband, and a lord, and I serve thee in the communion of saints, in the susception of sacraments, in the actions of a holy life, and in a never-failing love or uninterrupted devotion ; to the glory of thy name, and the promotion of all those ends of religion which thou hast designed in the excellent economy of Christianity. Grant this, holy Jesus, for thy mercy's sake, and for the honour of thy name, which is and shall be adored for ever and ever. Amen.

DISCOURSE V.

Of Temptation.

1. GOD, who is the fountain of good, did choose rather to bring good out of evil, than not to suffer any evil to be : not only because variety of accidents and natures do better entertain our affections and move our spirits, who are transported and suffer great impressions by a circumstance, by the very opposition and accidental lustre and eminency of contraries ; but also that the glory of the divine providence, in turning the nature of things into the designs of God, might be illustrious, and that may in a mixed condition have more observation, and after our danger and our labour we may obtain a greater reward. For temptation is the opportunity of virtue and a crown : God having disposed us in such a condition, that our virtues must be difficult, our inclinations averse and corrigible, our avocations many, our hostilities bitter, our dangers proportionable ; that our labour might be great, our inclinations suppressed and corrected, our intentions be made actual, our enemies be resisted, and our dangers pass into security and honour, after a *contestation*, and a victory, and a perseverance.

It is every man's case : trouble is as certainly the lot of our nature and inheritance, and we are so sure to be tempted, that in the deepest peace and silence of spirit oftentimes is our greatest danger : not to be tempted, is sometimes our most subtle temptation.¹ It is certain then, we cannot be secure, when our security is our enemy : but therefore we must do as God himself does, make the best of it, and not be sad at that which is the public portion and the case of all men, but order it according to their intention, place it in the eye of virtue, that all its actions and motions may tend thither, there to be changed into felicities. But certain it is, unless we first be cut and hewn in the mountains, we shall not be fixed in the temple of God ; but by incision and contusions our roughnesses may become plain, or our sparks kindled, and we may be either for the temple or the altar, spiritual building or holy fire, something that God shall delight in ; and then the temptation was not amiss.

2. And therefore we must not wonder that oftentimes it so happens, that nothing will remove a temptation, no diligence, no advices, no labour, no prayers : not because these are ineffectual, but because it is most fit the temptation should abide, for ends of God's designing. And although St. Paul was a person whose prayers were likely to be prevalent, and his industry of much prudence and efficacy toward the drawing out of his thorn ; yet God would not do it, but continued his war, only

¹ Erras, mi frater, erras, si putas unquam Christianum persecutionem non pati. Tunc maximé oppugnaris, si te oppugnari nescis. S. Hier. ad Heliod.—“ You err, my brother, you err, if you suppose that a Christian is ever free from persecution. You are then most troubled when you think you are not troubled.”

promising to send him succour : ‘ My grace is sufficient for thee ;’¹ meaning, he should have an enemy to try his spirit and improve it, and he should also have God’s grace to comfort and support it ; but as without God’s grace the enemy would spoil him, so without an enemy God’s grace would never swell up into glory and crown him. For the caresses of a pleasant fortune are apt to swell into extravagancies of spirit, and burst into the dissolution of manners ; and unmixed joy is dangerous : but if in our fairest flowers we spy a locust, or feel the uneasiness of a sackcloth under our fine linen, or our purple be tied with an uneven and a rude cord ; any little trouble, but to correct our wildnesses, though it be but a death’s-head served up at our feasts, it will make our tables fuller of health and freer from snare, it will allay our spirits, making them to retire from the weakness of dispersion, to the union and strength of a sober recollection.

3. Since therefore it is no part of our employment or our care to be free from all the attempts of an enemy, but to be safe in despite of his hostility, it will now concern us to inform ourselves of the state of the war in general, and then to make provisions and to put on armour accordingly.

4. First, St. Cyprian often observes, and makes much of the discourse, that the devil, when he intends a battery, first views the strengths and situation of the place.² His sense drawn out of the cloud of an allegory is this : the devil first considers the constitution and temper of the person he is to tempt ; and where he observes his natural inclina-

¹ 2 Cor. xli. 9.

² Serm. de Zelo.

tion apt for a vice, he presents him with objects, and opportunity, and arguments fitting to his captive disposition ; from which he is likely to receive the smaller opposition, since there is a party within that desires his intromission. Thus to lustful natures he represents the softer whispers of the spirit of fornication ; to the angry and revengeful he offers to consideration the satisfactions and content of a full revenge, and the emissions of anger ; to the envious he makes panegyrics on our rivals, and swells our fancies to opinion, our opinion to self-love, self-love to arrogance, and these are supported by contempt of others, and all determine upon envy, and expire in malice. Now in these cases, when our natures are captive and unhand-some, it were good we were conscious of our own weaknesses, and by special arts and strengths of mortification fortify that part where we are apt and exposed to danger : we are sure enough to meet a storm there, and we also are likely to perish in it, unless we correct those aversenesses and natural indispositions, and reduce them to the evennesses of virtue or the affections and moderation of a good nature. Let us be sure that the devil take not a helve from our own branches to fit his axe. that so he may cut the tree down. And certainly he that does violence to his nature, will not be easy to the entertainment of affections preternatural and violent.

5. Secondly, But the devil also observes all our exterior accidents, occasions, and opportunities of action ; he sees what company we keep, he observes what degrees of love we have to our wives, what looseness of affection towards children, how prevalent their persuasions, how inconvenient their

urses, how trifling their interests, and to what ends of determination they move us by their opportunity or their power. The devil tempted him by his wife, because he saw his affections pliant, and encircling her with the entertainments of fondness, joy, wonder, and amorous fancy. In her hand that made the fruit beautiful to him. She saw it fair of itself, and so she did not. But Adam was not moved by that argument, 'the woman gave it me, and I did eat.' She gave vivacity to the temptation, and efficacy to the argument. And the severity of the man's unyielding would have given a reasonable answer to the insinuations of the serpent: that was an unclean beast, and his arguments not being of themselves convincing to a wise person, either must put the advantages of a fair insinuation and representation or they are returned with scorn: but when the beautiful hands of his young virgin mistress were the orators, the temptation was an *amorce*; he kisses the presenter, and hugs the

Here therefore is our safest course, to make abatement of all those excrescences of affection which, like the wild and irregular sucker, draw away nourishment from the trunk, making it sterile as itself is unprofitable. As we must curb the inclinations of nature, so also of society and relation, when they become inconvenient; let nothing of our family be so adopted or cherished into our affections, as to create within new concupiscence, and a second time spoliation. What God intended to us for a help, let our fondnesses convert into a snare. And let it not be ready to deny the importunities, and neglect the interests of a wife, or child, or friend,

when the question is for God, deserves to miss the comforts of a good, and to feel the troubles of an imperious woman.

6. 'Thirdly, We also have ends and designs of our own, some great purpose upon which the greatest part of our life turns. It may be we are to raise a family, to recover a sunk estate; or else ambition, honour, or a great employment is the great hinge of all our greater actions: and some men are apt to make haste to be rich, or are to pass through a great many difficulties to be honourable. And here the devil will swell the hopes and obstruct the passages: he will heighten the desire, and multiply the business of access; making the concupiscence more impatient, and yet the way to the purchase of our purposes so full of employment and variety, that both the implacable desire and the multitude of changes and transactions may increase the danger and multiply the sin. When the enemy hath observed our ends, he makes his temptations to reflect from that angle which is direct upon them, provoking to malice and impatience against whomsoever we find standing in our way, whether willingly or by accident. Then follow naturally all those sins which are instrumental to removing the impediments, to facilitating the passage, to endearing our friends, to procuring more confidants, to securing our hopes, and entering upon possession. Simon Magus had a desire to be accounted some great one; and by that purpose he was tempted to sorcery and divination; and with a new object he brought a new sin into the world, adding simony to his sorcery, and taught posterity that crime, which till then had neither name nor being. And those ecclesiastics who

violently affect rich or pompous prelacies, pollute themselves with worldly arts, growing covetous as Syrian merchants, ambitious as the Levantine princes, factious as the people, revengeful as jealousy, and proud as conquerors and usurpers: and by this means beasts are brought into the temple, and the temple itself is exposed to sale, and the holy rites as well as the beasts of sacrifice are made venal. To prevent the infinite inconveniences that thrust themselves into the common and great roads of our life, the best course is to cut our great channel into little rivulets, making our ends the more, that we may be indifferent to any, proposing nothing great, that our desires may be little: for so we shall be better able to digest the troubles of an enemy, the contradictions of an unhandsome accident, the crossing of our hopes, because our desires are even, and our ends are less considerable; and we can with much readiness divert upon another purpose, having another ready with the same proportion to our hopes and desires as the first. Thus if we propound to ourselves an honest employment, or a quiet retirement, a work of charity abroad, or of devotion at home, if we miss in our first setting forth, we return to shore, where we can negotiate with content, it being alike to us either to traffic abroad with more gain, or trade at home with more safety. But when we once grow great in our desires, fixing too earnestly upon one object, we either grow impatient, (as Rachel, 'Give me children, or I die;') or take ill courses, and use unlawful means; (as Thamar, choosing rather to lie with her father than die without issue;) or else are miserable in the loss and frustration of our hopes, (*like the women of Ramah, who would not*

be comforted.) Let therefore our life be moderate, our desires reasonable, our hopes little, and our station none in eminency and prelation above others, as the rays of light passing through the thin sides of a small and undiscerned pyramis, but when they strike upon a wall are doubled, and increase themselves to a scorching and troublesome heat; so the passions of man, if they pass through an even and ordinary life towards the issues of an ordinary necessary course, they are little and without disturbance; but if they pass upon an end of difficulty or ambition, they duplicate and increase to a disturbance. And we have seen the temperate lives of indifferent persons contain many degrees of innocence: but the tenor of busy designs is too great even for the best dispositions.

7. But these temptations are crasse and gross, and soon discernible: it will require some observation to arm against such as are mortal and immaterial. For he hath apples to tempt children, and gold for men: the kingdoms of the world for the ambition of princes, and the pleasures of the world for the intemperate; he hath dissimulation and fair-spoken principles to abuse the philosophers to reason, and he hath common prejudices to the more vulgar understandings. Among these I choose to consider such as are by way of proposition or proposition.

8. The first great principle of temptation to be noted, is a general mistake, which excuses many of our crimes upon pretence of necessity, in calling all those sins to which by natural inclination we are inclined (though by carelessness and evil customs they are heightened to a habit

name of sins of infirmity ; to which men suppose they have reason and title to pretend. If, when they have committed a crime, their conscience checks them, and they are troubled, and, during the interval and abatement of the heats of desire, resolve against it, and commit it readily at the next opportunity ; then they cry out against the weakness of their nature, and think, as long as this body of death is about them, it must be thus, and that this condition may stand with the state of grace : and then the sins shall return periodically, like the revolutions of a quartan ague, well and ill for ever, till death surprises the mistaker. This is a patron of sins, and makes the temptation prevalent by an authentic instrument. And they pretend the words of St. Paul, ‘ For the good that I would, that I do not ; but the evil that I would not, that I do. For there is a law in my members rebelling against the law of my mind, bringing me into captivity to the law of sin.’¹ And thus the state of sin is mistaken for a state of grace, and the imperfections of the law are miscalled the affections and necessities of nature, that they might seem to be incurable, and the persons apt for an excuse therefore, because for nature there is no absolute cure. But that these words of St. Paul may not become a savour of death and instruments of a temptation to us, it is observable, that the apostle by a fiction of person (as is usual with him²) speaks of himself not as in the state of regeneration under the gospel, but under the difficulties, obscurities, insufficiencies, and imperfections

¹ Rom. vii. 19, 23.

² Ut videre est. Rom. iii. 7 ; Gal. ii. 18 ; 1 Cor. vi. 12 ; and x. 23, 29, 30 ; and xiii. 2.

of the law ; which indeed he there contends to have been a rule good and holy, apt to remonstrate our misery, because by its prohibitions and limits given to natural desires, it made actions (before indifferent) now to be sins, it added many curses to the breakers of it, and by an efficacy of contrariety it made us more desirous of what was now unlawful : but it was a covenant in which our nature was restrained, but not helped ; it was provoked, but not sweetly assisted ; our understandings were instructed, but our wills not sanctified, and there were no suppletories of repentance ; every greater sin was like the fall of an angel, irreparable by any mystery or express, recorded or enjoined. Now of a man under this covenant he describes the condition to be such, that he understands his duty, but by the infirmities of nature he is certain to fall, and by the helps of the law not strengthened against it, nor restored after : and therefore he calls himself, under that notion, a miserable man, sold under sin, not doing according to the rules of the law or the dictates of his reason, but by the unaltered misery of his nature certain to prevaricate. But the person described here is not St. Paul, is not any justified person, not so much as a Christian, but one who is under a state of direct opposition to the state of grace ; as will manifestly appear if we observe the antithesis from St. Paul's own characters. For the man here named is such, as in whom 'sin wrought all concupiscence, in whom sin lived, and slew him ;' ¹ so that he was 'dead in trespasses and sins : ' and although he 'did delight in the law after his inward man,' ² that is, his understanding had

¹ Rom. vii. 8, 9, 11.

² Ibid. verse 22.

lectual complacencies and satisfactions, which wards he calls 'serving the law of God with mind,'¹ (that is, in the first dispositions and arations of his spirit,) yet he could act ing; for the law in his members did enslave

'and brought him into captivity to the law n.'² So that this person was full of actual effective lusts, he was a slave to sin, and dead espases. But the state of a regenerate per- is such, as to have 'crucified the flesh with affections and lusts;'³ in whom sin did not reign, only in the mind, but even also not 'in the al body;' over whom 'sin had no dominion;' hom 'the old man was crucified,' and 'the ' of sin was destroyed, and sin not at all served.'⁴

to make the antithesis yet clearer, in the very nning of the next chapter the apostle saith, 'the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus had made free from the law of sin and death;'⁵ under h law, he complained immediately before, he 'sold and killed:' to show the person was not ame in these so different and contradictory esentments. No man in the state of grace can 'the evil that I would not, that I do,' if by he means any evil that is habitual, or in its nature deadly.

So that now let no man pretend an inevitable ssity to sin; for if ever it come to a custom or great violation, though but in a single act, it condition of carnality, not of spiritual life: those are not the infirmities of nature, but the nesses of grace, that make us sin so frequently;

omp. vii. 25.

² Ibid. verse 23.

³ Gal. v. 24.

⁴ Rom. vi. 6, 12, 14.

⁵ Rom. viii. 2.

which the apostle truly affirms to the same purpose: 'The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other:'¹ so that 'ye cannot do' (or that ye do not do) 'the things that ye would.'² This disability proceeds from the strength of the flesh and weakness of the spirit. For he adds, 'but if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law:'³ saying plainly that the state of such a combat, and disability of doing good, is a state of a man 'under the law,' or 'in the flesh,' which he accounts all one: but every man that is sanctified under the gospel, is 'led by the Spirit,' and 'walks in the Spirit, and brings forth the fruits of the Spirit.' It is not our excuse, but the aggravation of our sin, that we fall again in despite of so many resolutions to the contrary. And let us not flatter ourselves into a confidence of sin, by supposing the state of grace can stand with the custom of any sin: for it is the state either of an *animalis homo*, (as the apostle calls him,) that is, a man in pure naturals, without the clarity of divine revelations, who 'cannot perceive or understand the things of God;'⁴ or else of the 'carnal man;' that is, a person who, though in his mind he is convinced, yet he is not yet freed from the dominion of sin, but only hath his eyes opened, but not his bonds loosed. For by the perpetual analogy and frequent expresses in Scripture, 'the spiritual person,' or the man 'redeemed by the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, is 'free from the law,' and the 'dominion,' and the 'kingdom,' and 'power' of all sin.'⁵ 'For to be carnally

¹ Gal. v. 17² ἵνα μὴ ποιῇτε.³ Ibid. verse 18.⁴ Rom. vii. 14.⁵ Rom. viii. 6.

ed is death, but to be spiritually minded is
and peace.'

'But sins of infirmity, in true sense of Scrip-
signify nothing but the sins of an unholy and
sanctified nature, when they are taken for ac-
done against the strength of resolution, out of
rength of natural appetite and violence of de-
and therefore, in Scripture, the state of sin
be state of infirmity is all one. 'For when
ere yet without strength, in due time Christ
for the ungodly,'¹ saith the apostle. The
tion in which we were when Christ became a
ice for us, was certainly a condition of sin and
y with God; and yet this he calls a being
out strength,' or in a state of weakness and
uity: which we, who believe all our strength
derived from Christ's death, and the assistance
e Holy Spirit, the fruit of his ascension, may
apprehend to be the true meaning of the

And in this sense is that saying of our
d Saviour, 'The whole have no need of a phy-
, but they that are weak;' for therefore Christ
e into the world to save sinners; those are
ersons of Christ's infirmity, whose restitution
eduction to a state of life and health was his
design. So that whosoever sin habitually,
s, constantly, periodically, at the revolution of
ptation, or frequently or easily, are persons
till remain in the state of sin and death; and
intervals of piety are but preparations to
e of grace, which they may then be when
re not used to countenance or excuse the sin,

m. v. 6. *ὄντων ἡμῶν ἀσθενῶν, τέτρετον ἀσεβῶν,*
at strength, that is, ungodly.'

or to flatter the person.¹ But if the intermediate resolutions of emendation (though they never run beyond the next assault of passion or desire) be taken for a state of grace blended with infirmities of nature, they become destructive of all those purposes, through our mistake, which they might have promoted if they had been rightly understood, observed, and cherished. Sometimes, indeed, the greatness of a temptation may become an instrument to excuse some degrees of the sin, and make the man pitiable, whose ruin seems almost certain, because of the greatness and violence of the enemy, meeting with a natural aptness; but then the question will be, whither and to what actions that strong temptation carries him; whether to a work of a mortal nature, or only to a small irregularity; that is, whether to death, or to a wound. For whatever the principle be, if the effect be death, the man's case was therefore to be pitied, because his ruin was the more inevitable: not so pitied as to excuse him from the state of death; for let the temptation be never so strong, every Christian man hath assistances sufficient to support him, so as that, without his own yielding, no temptation is stronger than that grace which God offers him: for if it were, it were not so much as a sin of infirmity. it were no sin at all. This therefore must be certain to us, when the violence of our passions or desires overcomes our resolutions and fairer purposes, against the dictate of our reason, that indeed is a state of infirmity, but it is also of sin and death, a state of immortification; because the offices of grace are to crucify the old man; that is.

¹ Vide August. lib. ii. c. 17. de Peccatorum meritis, et Exchir. 18.

our former and impurer conversation, to subdue the petulancy of our passions, to reduce them to reason, and to restore empire and dominion to the superior faculties. So that this condition, in proper speaking, is not so good as the infirmity of grace, but it is no grace at all : for ‘ whoever are Christ’s, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.’¹ Those other imperfect, ineffective resolutions are but the first approaches of the kingdom of Christ, nothing but the clarities of lightning, dark as soon as light : and they therefore cannot be excuses to us, because the contrary weaknesses (as we call them) do not make the sin involuntary, but chosen and pursued ; and in true speaking it is the strength of the lust, not the infirmity of a state of grace.

11. But yet there is a condition of grace which is a state of little and imperfect ones, such as are called in Scripture ‘ smoking flax’ and ‘ bruised reeds ;’ which is a state of the first dawning of the Sun of Righteousness, when the lights of grace new rise upon our eyes. And then indeed they are weak, and have a more dangerous neighbourhood of temptations and desires ;² but they are not subdued by them : they sin not by direct election : their actions criminal are but like the slime of Nilus, leaving rats half formed ; they sin but seldom ; and when they do, it is in small instances ; and then also by surprise, by inadvertency ; and then also they interrupt their own acts, and lessen them perpetually ; and never do an act of sinfulness, but the principle is such as makes it to be involuntary in many degrees. For when the

¹ Gal. v. 24.

² *S. August. lib. de Gratia et liber. Arbit. c. 17. et c. 20.*

understanding is clear, and the dictate of reason undisturbed and determinate, whatsoever then produces an irregular action excuses not, because the action is not made the less voluntary by it ; for the action is not made involuntary from any other principle but from some defect of understanding, either in act, or habit, or faculty. For where there is no such defect, there is a full deliberation according to the capacity of the man, and then the act of election that follows is clear and full, and is that proper disposition which makes him truly capable of punishment or reward respectively. Now, although in the first beginnings of grace there is not a direct ignorance to excuse totally ; yet, because a sudden surprise or an inadvertency is not always in our power to prevent, these things do lessen the election and freedom of the action : and then, because they are but seldom, and never proceed to any length of time, or any great instances of crime, and are every day made still more infrequent, because grace growing stronger, the observation and advertency of the spirit and the attendance of the inner man grows more effectual and busy, this is a state of the imperfection of grace, but a state of grace it is. And it is more commonly observed to be expressed in the imperfection of our good actions, than in the irregularity of bad actions. And in this sense are those words of our blessed Saviour, ‘ The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak : ’ which in this instance was not expressed in sin, but in a natural imperfection, which then was a recession from a civility, a not watching with the Lord. And this is the only infirmity that can consist with the state of grace.

12. So that now we may lay what load we please.

pon our nature, and call our violent and unfortified desires by the name of an imperfect race: but then we are dangerously mistaken, and utter ourselves into an opinion of piety, when we are in the gall of bitterness; so making our misery the more certain and irremediable because we think it needs nothing but a perpetuity and perseverance to bring us to heaven. The violence of passion and desires is a misery of nature, but a perfect principle of sin; multiplying and repeating the acts, but not lessening the malignity. But sins of infirmity, when we mean sins of a less and lower malice, are sins of a less and imperfect choice, because of the unavoidable imperfection of the understanding. Sins of infirmity are always infirm sins, that is, weak and imperfect in their principle, and in their nature, and in their design; that is, they are actions incomplete in all their capacities. But then passions and periodical inclinations consisting with a regular and determined and actual understanding must never be their principle; for whatsoever proceeds thence is destructive of spiritual life, and inconsistent with the state of grace. But sins of infirmity, when they pretend to a less degree of malignity and a greater degree of excuse, are such as are little more than sins of pure and inculpable ignorance: for in that degree in which any other principle is mixed with them, in the same degree they are criminal and inexcusable. For as a sin of infirmity is pretended to be little in its value and malignity, so it is certain, if it be great in the instance, it is not a sin of infirmity; that is, it is a state or act of death, and absolutely inconsistent with the state of grace.

13. Secondly, Another principle of temptation

pregnant with sin, and fruitful of monsters, is a weaker pretence, which less wary and credulous persons abuse themselves withal, pretending as a ground for their confidence and incorrigible pursuance of their courses, that they have a good meaning, that they intend sometimes well, and sometimes not ill, and this shall be sufficient to sanctify their actions, and to hallow their sin. And this is of worse malice, when religion is the colour for a war, and the preservation of faith made the warrant for destruction of charity, and a zeal for God made the false light to lead us to disobedience to man, and hatred of idolatry is the usher of sacrilege, and the defiance of superstition the introducer of profaneness, and reformation made the colour for a schism, and liberty of conscience the way to a bold and saucy heresy; for the end may indeed hallow an indifferent action, but can never make straight a crooked and irregular. It was not enough for Saul to cry ‘for God and the sacrifice,’ that he spared the fat flocks of Amalek; and it would be a strange zeal and forwardness, that rather than the altar of incense should not smoke, will burn *assafætida*, or the marrow of a man’s bones. For as God will be honoured by us, so also in ways of his own appointment;¹ for we are the makers of our religion, if we in our zeal for God do what he hath forbidden us. And every sin committed for religion is just such a violence done to it as it seeks to prevent or remedy.

14. And so it is if it be committed for an end or pretence of charity, as well as of religion. We must be curious that no pretence engage us upon

¹ Vide historiam Uzzæ, 2 Sam. vi. 6, 7, 8, 9.

action that is certainly criminal in its own nature. Charity may sometimes require our lives, no obligation can endear a damnation to us. We are not bound to the choice of an eternal ruin, to save another. Indeed so far as an option will go, it may concern the excrescences of piety to choose by a tacit or express act of volition 'to be an anathema for our brethren,'¹ that is, by putting a case and fiction of law, to suppose it better, to wish it rather that I should perish than my nation. Thus far is charitable, because it is innocent: for as it is great love to our country, so it is uncharitableness to ourselves: for such options always are ineffective, and produce nothing but rewards of charity and greater glory. And the holy Jesus himself, who only could be and was effectually accursed to save us, got by it an exceeding high mighty glorification; and St. Paul did himself advantage by his charitable devotion for his countrymen. But since God never puts the question on us, so that either we or our nation must be damned, he having fixed every man's final condition on his own actions in the virtue and obedience to Christ, if we mistake the expresses of charity, and suffer ourselves to be damned indeed for God's glory or our brethren's good, we spoil the duty, and ruin ourselves when our option comes to act. It is observable, that although religion is often pretended to justify a sin, yet charity is but seldom: which makes it full of suspicion, that religion is but the cover to the death's-head, and at the best is but an accusing of God, that he is not willing or not able to preserve religion without our

¹ Rom. ix. 3.

irregular and impious co-operations. But however though it might concern us to wish ourselves rather accursed than religion, or our prince, or our country should perish, (for I find no instances that it is lawful so much as to wish it for the preservation of a single friend,) yet it is against charity to bring such a wish to pass, and by sin to damn ourselves really for a good end either of religion or charity.

15. Let us therefore serve God as he hath described the way: for all our accesses to him, being acts of his free concession and grace, must be by his own designation and appointment. We might as well have chosen what shape our bodies should be of, as of what instances the substance of our religion should consist.

16. Thirdly, A third principle of temptation is, an opinion of prosecuting actions of civility, compliance, and society, to the luxation of a point of piety and stricter duty; and good natures, persons of humane and sweeter dispositions, are too apt to dash upon this rock of offence. But the evil that I would note is, that there are some conditions of men to whom a vice is so accustomed, that he that mingles with them must handle the crime and touch the venom. There are some vices which are national, there are some that are points of honour, some are civilities of entertainment; and they are therefore accounted unavoidable, because the understandings of men are degenerate as their manners, and it is accounted sottish and fantastical not to communicate in their accustomed loosenesses. Amongst some men all their first addresses are drinkings, their entertainments intemperate beyond the permissions of Christian austerities; their

drink is humorous, and their humours quarellous, and it is dishonourable not to engage in duel, and venture your soul to ascertain an empty reputation, These inconveniencies rely upon false opinions and vain fancies, having no greater foundation than the sottish discourses of ignorant and ungodly persons; and they have no peculiar and appropriate remedy, but a resolute severity of manners, and a consideration what is required of us as Christians to confront against those fonder customs and expectations from us, as we engage in the puddles of the world and are blended in society.

17. To which purposes we must be careful not to engage too freely in looser company, never without business or unavoidable accidents; and when we mingle in affairs, it will concern our safety to watch, lest multitude of talk, goodness, and facility of nature, the delight of company, and the freedom and ill-customed civilities do by degrees draw us away from our guards and retirement of spirit. For in these cases every degree of dissolution disarms us of our strengths: and if we give way so far as we think it tolerable, we instantly and undiscernibly pass into unlawful and criminal. But our best defences are deposited in a severe and prudent understanding, and discerning the sottishness of such principles which represent vice in civil language, and propound a crime to you under the cover of kindness: which is just so much recompense as it is satisfaction to a condemned person that he was accused by a witty orator, and sentenced by an eloquent judge. Remember always, that the friendships of the world are enmity with God; and that those societies which are combined by relations of *drink, and wantonness, and impertinency, and*

crimes, are either inconsiderable in civility, or son, or reputation : no wise man is moved by testimony or discourses ; and they are so impudent, and undiscerning a theatre, that most commonly he is the best man who from thence worst reported and represented.

18. But in all the instances of this great the very stating the question right is above all victory. For it is a question between mistake and duty ; piety on one side, and the disguises of humanity on the other. God and man are the parties interested : and to counterpoise the influence of the sight and face of man, (which in a visible communication, it is not in our power to neglect or contradict,) there are all the excellencies of God, the effects of his power, his certain presence and omniscience, the severity of his judgment, and the sweetness and invitation of his mercies ; besides the prudence, wisdom, and satisfaction to the spirit when we wisely resist such sottish and low abuses and temptations, and conform to the rules of reason and duty, in compliance with the purposes of God and our obligations.

19. These ill-managed principles are dangerous as universal as an infected air ; yet there are diseases more proper to the particular state of religion :—First, To young beginners in religion he represents the difficulties of religion, and confounds the greater examples of holy persons, affrights them with those mountains of piety, and serving where and upon what instance of service his fancy will be most apprehensive and afraid, and this he fails not often to represent with confidence, that by believing no piety less than the

est can be good, he may despair of those heights, and retire into the securities and indifferences of a careless life. But this is to be cured by all those instruments of piety which in special are incentives of the love of God, and endearments of spiritual and religious affections; and particularly by consideration of the divine goodness, who knows whereof we are made, and remembers that we are but dust, and will require no more of us than according to our powers and present capacities. But the subject-matter of this temptation is considered and refuted in the discourse of the love of God.¹

20. But most commonly young beginners are zealous and high, and not so easily tempted to recession, till after a long time, by a revolution of affections, they are abated by a defervescency in holy actions. The devil uses to prompt them on; not that he loves the piety and the progress, but that he would engage the person in imprudencies, and such forwardness of expresses, which either are in their own nature indiscretions, or from which, by reason of the incapacity of the person, it is necessary for him to retire. A new convert is like a bird newly entered into a net, through which possibly she might pass without danger, if her fears and unreasonable strivings did not entangle her; but when, by busy and undisturbed flutterings, she discomposes the order of it, she is entangled and unpenned, and made a prey to her treacherous enemy. Such are the indiscreet strivings and too forward enterprises of new penitents, whom we shall observe too often undertaking great austerities, making vows and casting bands

¹ *Part ii. in Explicat. of the Decalogue, 1. Com.*

upon their liberty, and snares upon their piety, thinking nothing great enough to expiate the sin, or to present to God, or to endear their service, to secure their perseverance: and therefore they lay a load of fetters upon themselves, or rather cut off their legs that they may never go back: and by laying an obligation of vows and intolerable burdens on themselves, that by these they may make a compendium of piety, redeem the time, and prevent those who make it possible to prevaricate. But the preservation of the sad events and final accidents of these men hath given probation of the inclination of such furious addresses and begins the execution. And it was prudently done of Meletius of Antioch when he visited the dioceses of Syria, and several religious persons famous for severe undertakings; espying that Simeon Stylites dwelt upon a pillar, and had bound his leg with a strong chain of iron, he sent for a smith, causing it to be cut off, and said "to a man that loves God, his chain is a sufficient chain." For the loads of voluntary austerities rashly undertaken make religion barren when their first heats expire; and their labours which are intended to secure the practice and perpetuate the piety, are but the occasions of a more grievous crime: and the vow does not secure piety, but the weariness and satiety of the practice tempts to the breaking of the vow, or at least makes the man impatient, when he cannot persist in content, nor retire with safety.

21. It therefore concerns all spiritual guides to manage their new converts with sober counsels and moderate permissions, knowing that sin

¹ Theod. lib. v. c. 4.

speculations in the metaphysics are not fit entertainment for an infant-understanding. There is 'milk for babes, and strong meat for men' of riper piety: and it will employ all the regular strength of young beginners to contest against the relics of those mischiefs which remain since the expulsion of the old man, and to master those difficulties which, by the nature of the state, are certainly consequent to so late mutation. And if we, by the furies of zeal and the impatience of mistaken piety, are violent and indiscreet in the destroying of our enemies, we probably may tread the thistle down, and trample upon all its appearances, and yet leave the root in the ground with haste and imprudent forwardness. Gentle and soft counsels are the surest enemies to your vice, and the best conservators and promoters of a virtuous state: but a hasty charge and the conduct of a young leader may engage an early spirit in dangers and dishonours. And this temptation is of so much greater danger, because it hath a face of zeal, and meets with all encouragements from without; every man being apt to cherish a convert, and to inflame his new fires: but few consider the inconveniences that are consequent to indiscreet beginnings, and the worse events usually appendant to such inconveniences.

22. Indeed it is not usual that prudence and a new-kindled zeal meet in the same person: but it will therefore concern the safety of new converts, who cannot guide themselves, to give themselves up to the conduct of an experienced spiritual person, who being disinterested in those heats of the first apprehensions, and being long taught, by the observation of the accidents of a spiritual life, upon

what rocks rashness and zeal usually do engage us, can best tell what degrees and what instances of religion they may with most safety undertake. But for the general, it is best in the addresses of grace to follow the course of nature: let there be an infancy, and a childhood, and a vigorous youth; and, by the divers and distant degrees of increment, let the persons be established in wisdom and grace. But above all things, let them be careful that they do not lay upon themselves necessities of any lasting course, no vows of perpetuity in any instance of uncommanded action or degree of religion: for he may alter in his capacity and exterior condition; he may see, by experience, that the particular engagement is imprudent; he may, by the virtue of obedience, be engaged on a duty inconsistent with the conveniences and advantages of the other; and his very loss of liberty in an uncommanded instance may tempt him to inconvenience. But then, for the single and transient actions of piety, although in them the danger is less even though the imprudence be great, yet it were well if new beginners in religion would attempt a moderate and an even piety, rather than actions of eminency, lest they retire with shame, and be afflicted with scruple, when their first heats are spent, and expire in weariness and temptation. It is good to keep within the circuits of a man's affections, not stretching out all the degrees of fancy and desire, but leaving the appetites of religion rather unsatisfied, and still desiring more, than by stretching out the whole faculty leave no desires but what are fulfilled and wearied.

23. Thirdly, I shall not need here to observe such temptations which are direct invitations to

sin, upon occasion of the piety of holy persons ; such as are security, too much confidence, pride, and vanity : these are part of every man's danger, and are to be considered upon their several arguments. Here I was only to note the general instruments of mischief. It remains now that I speak of such remedies and general antidotes, not which are proportioned to sins in special, but such as are preventions or remedies and good advices in general.

24. First, Let every man abstain from all occasions of sin as much as his condition will permit. And it were better to do some violence to our secular affairs, than to procure apparent or probable danger to our souls. For if we see not a way open and ready prepared to our iniquity, our desires oftentimes are not willing to be troubled ; but opportunity gives life and activeness to our appetites. If David had not from his towers beheld the private beauties of Bathsheba, Uriah had lived, and his wife been unattempted ; but sin was brought to him by that chance, and entering at the casement of his eyes, set his heart on fire, and despoiled him of his robes of honour and innocence. The riches of the wedge of gold and the beauty of the Babylonish garment made Achan sacrilegious upon the place, who was innocent enough in his preceding purposes. And therefore that soul that makes itself an object to sin, and invites an enemy to view its possessions, and live in the vicinage, loves the sin itself : and he that is pleased with the danger, would willingly be betrayed into the necessity and the pleasure of the sin. For he can have no other end to entertain the hazards, but that he hath a further purpose to serve upon them : he loves the pleasure of the sin, and therefore he would make

the condition of sinning certain and unavoidable And therefore Holy Scripture, which is admirable and curious in the cautions and securities of virtue, does not determine its precepts in the precise commands of virtuous actions, but also binds up our senses, obstructs the passage of temptation, blocks up all the ways and avenues of vice, commanding us 'to make a covenant with our eyes, not to look upon a maid, not to sit with a woman that is a singer, not to consider the wine when it sparkles, and gives its colour rightly in the cup;' but 'to set a watch before our mouths, to keep the door of our lips;' and many more instances to this purpose, that sin may not come so near as to be repulsed: as knowing, sin hath then prevailed too far, when we give the denial to its solicitations.

25. We read a story of a virtuous lady, that desired of St. Athanasius to procure for her, out of the number of the widows fed from the ecclesiastical corban, an old woman morose, peevish, and impatient, that she might by the society of so ungentle a person have often occasion to exercise her patience, her forgiveness, and charity. I know not how well the counsel succeeded with her: I am sure it was not very safe: and to invite the trouble to triumph over it, is to wage a war of an uncertain issue, for no end but to get the pleasures of the victory, which oftentimes do not pay for the trouble, never for the danger. An Egyptian, who acknowledged fire for his god, one day doing his devotions, kissed his god after the manner of worshippers, and burnt his lips. It was not in the power of that false and imaginary deity to cure the real hurt he had done to his devoutest worshipper. Just such a fool is he that kisses a danger, though

with a design of virtue, and hugs an opportunity of sin for an advantage of piety : he burns himself in the neighbourhood of the flame, and twenty to one but he may perish in its embraces. And he that looks out a danger that he may overcome it, does as did the Persian, who, worshipping the sun, looked upon him when he prayed him to cure his sore eyes. The sun may as well cure a weak eye, or a great burden knit a broken arm, as a danger can do him advantage that seeks such a combat which may ruin him, and after which he rarely may have this reward, that it may be said of him, he had the good fortune not to perish in his folly. It is easier to prevent a mischief than to cure it : and besides the pain of the wound, it is infinitely more full of difficulty to cure a broken leg, which a little care and observation would have preserved whole. To recover from a sin is none of the easiest labours that concern the sons of men ; and therefore it concerns them rather not to enter into such a narrow strait, from which they can never draw back their head, without leaving their hair and skin and their ears behind. If God please to try us, he means no hurt, and he does it with great reason and great mercy ; but if we go to try ourselves, we may mean well, but not wisely. For as it is simply unlawful for weak persons to seek a temptation, so for the more perfect it is dangerous. We have enemies enough without, and one of our own within : but we become our own tempter, when we run out to meet the world, or invite the devil home, that we may throw holy water upon his flames, and call the danger nearer, that we may run from it. And certainly men are more guilty of

many of their temptations than the devil,' th
their incuriousness or rashness doing as muc
chief to themselves as he can : for he can but
and so much we do when we run into danger.
were those stories of St. Antony provoking the
to battle. If the stories had been as true :
actions were rash and ridiculous, the story ha
ened a note of indiscretion upon that good
though now I think there is nothing but a m
fiction and falsehood on the writer.

26. Secondly, Possibly without fault we m
engaged in a temptation ; but then we m
diligent to resist the first beginnings : for
our strength is yet entire and unabated, if w
fer ourselves to be overcome, and consent
first and weakest attempts, how shall we be
resist when it hath tried our contestation, and
ried our patience, when we are weaker and
vailed upon, and the temptation is stronge
triumphant in many degrees of victory ? B
much a hectic fever is harder to be cured t
tertian, or a consumption of the lungs than
distillation of rheum upon the throat, by so
it is harder to prevail upon a triumphing lus
upon its first insinuations. But the ways
sisting are of a different consideration, p
tionably to the nature of the crimes.

27. First, If the temptation be to crimes of
sure and sensuality, let the resistance be by fl
for in case of lust, even to consider the argu
against it is half as great temptation as to pre

¹ Ecclus. xxi. 27. Quum exsecratur impius Satanam
ipsius animam exsecratur.

² Time videre unde possis cadere : noli fieri perversa si
tate securus. S. Aug.

arguments for it; for all considerations of such allurements make the soul perceive something of its relish, and entertain the fancy. Even the pulling pitch from our clothes defiles the fingers; and some adherences of pleasant and carnal sins will be remanent even from those considerations which stay within the circuit of the flames, though but with purpose to quench the fire and preserve the house. Chastity cannot suffer the least thought of the reproaches of the spirit of impurity: and it is necessary to all that will keep their purity and innocence against sensual temptations, to avoid every thing that may prejudice decorum. Libanius the sophister reports, that a painter being one day desirous to paint Apollo upon a laurel-board, the colours would not stick, but were rejected: out of which his fancy found out this extraction; that the chaste Daphne (concerning whom the poets feign, that flying from Apollo, who attempted to ravish her, she was turned into a laurel-tree¹) could not endure him, even the painting, and rejected him after the loss of her sensitive powers. And indeed chaste souls do even to death resent the least image and offer of impurity. Whatsoever is like a sin of uncleanness, he that means to preserve himself chaste must avoid, as he would avoid the sin; in this case there being no difference but of degrees between the inward temptation and the crime.

28. Secondly, If the temptation be to crimes of troublesome and preternatural desires or intellectual nature, let the resistance be made *consertâ manu*, by a perfect sight, by the amassing of such argu-

¹ *Kai ἀρνεῖται τὸν ἔρωτα, καὶ τὸ δένδρον.*

ments in general and remedies in particular which are apt to become deleteries to the sin, and to abate the temptation. But in both these instances the resistance must at least be as soon as the attempt is, lest the violence of the temptation outrun our powers: for if against our full strength it hath prevailed to the first degrees, its progress to a complete victory is not so improbable as were its successes at the first beginnings. But to serve this and all other ends in the resisting and subduing a temptation, these following considerations have the best and most universal influence.

29. First, consideration of the presence of God, who is witness of all our actions, and a revenger of all impiety. This is so great an instrument of fear and religion, that whoever does actually consider God to be present, and considers what the first consideration signifies, either must be restrained from the present temptation, or must have thrown off all the possibilities and aptnesses of virtue; such as are modesty, and reverence, and holy fear. For if the face of a man scatters all base machinations, and we dare not act our crimes in the theatre, unless we be impudent as well as criminal; much more does the sense of a present Deity fill the places of our heart with veneration and the awe of religion, when it is thoroughly apprehended and actually considered. We see not God, he is not in our thoughts, when we run into darkness to act our impurities. For we dare not commit adultery if a boy be present; behold, the boy is sent off with an excuse, and God abides there, but yet we commit the crime; it is because, as Jacob said at Bethel. 'God was in that place, and we knew not of it: and yet we neither breathe nor move an artery but

in him and by his assistance. ‘In him we live, and move, and have our being.’¹ And, ‘All things are naked and open in his sight.’² ‘The iniquity of my people is very great; for they say, the Lord seeth not.’³ ‘Shall not he that made the eye see?’⁴ ‘To him the night and day are both alike.’⁵ These and many to the same design are the voices of Scripture, that our spirits may retire into the beholding of God, to the purposes of fear and holiness, with whom we do cohabit by the necessities of nature, and the condition of our essence wholly in dependence: and then only we may sin securely, when we can contrive to do it so that God may not see us.

30. There are many men who are servants of the eyes, as the apostle’s phrase is,⁶ who when they are looked on, act virtue with much pompousness and theatrical bravery; but these men, when the theatre is empty, put off their upper garment, and retire into their primitive baseness. Diogenes endured the extremity of winter’s cold, that the people might wonder at his austerity and philosophical patience:⁷ but Plato, seeing the people admiring the man, and pitying the sufferance, told them, that the way to make him warm himself, was for them to be gone, and to take no notice of him.⁸ For they that walk as in the sight of men, serve that design well enough when they fill the public voice with noises and opinions, and are not by their

¹ Acts, xvii. 28.

² Heb. iv. 13.

³ Ezek. ix. 9; Jer. xxiii. 24.

⁴ Psalm xciv. 9.

⁵ Psal. cxxxix. 12.

⁶ Ephes. vi. 6. Ὁφθαλμόδελοι.

⁷ Quintil. lib. i. proem.

⁸ Ambitio et luxuria et impotentia scenam desiderant; sanabia ista, si absconderis. Senec. ep. 15.

purposes engaged to act in private :¹ but they who are servants of the eyes of God, and walk as in the divine presence, perceive the same restraints in darkness, in closets, and grots, as in the light and midst of theatres. And that consideration imposes upon us a happy necessity of doing virtuously, which presents us placed in the eyes of our judge. And therefore it was not unhandsomely said of a Jewish doctor, "If every man would consider God to be the great eye of the world, watching perpetually over all our actions, and that his hand is indefatigable, and his ear ever open, possibly sin might be extirpated from off the face of the earth." And this is the condition of beatitude; and the blessed souls within their regions of light and felicity cannot sin, because of the vision beatifical; they always behold the face of God. And those who partake of this state by way of consideration, which is essential to the condition of the blessed, and derive it into practice and discourse, in proportion to this shall retain an innocence and a part of glory.

31. For it is a great declension of human reason, and a disreputation to our spirits, that we are so wholly led by sense, that we will not walk in the regions of the spirit, and behold God by our eyes of faith and discourse; suffering our course of life to be guided by such principles which distinguish our natures from beasts, and our conditions from vicious, and our spirits from the world, and our hopes from the common satisfactions of sense and corruption. The better half of our nature is of

¹ Magna vobis, si dissimulare non vultis, injecta necessitas probitatis, cum omnia agitis ante oculos Judicis cuncta cernitis. Boeth. lib. v. Consol. proa ult.

the same constitution with that of angels: and therefore, although we are drenched in matter and the communications of earth, yet our better part was designed to converse with God. And we had, besides the eye of reason, another eye of faith put into our souls, and both clarified with revelations and demonstrations of the Spirit, expressing to us so visible and clear characters of God's presence, that the expression of the same Spirit is, 'we may feel him, for he is within us,'¹ and about us, and we are in him, and in the comprehensions of his embracings, as birds in the air, or as infants in the wombs of their pregnant mothers. And that God is pleased not to communicate himself to the eyes of our body, but still to remain invisible, besides that it is his own glory and perfection, it is also no more to us but like a retreat behind a curtain, where when we know our judge stands as an espial, and a watch over our actions, we shall be sottish if we dare to provoke his jealousy, because we see him not, when we know that he is close by, though behind the cloud.

32. There are some general impressions upon our spirits, which by way of presumption and custom possess our persuasions, and make restraint upon us to excellent purposes; such as are the religion of holy places, reverence of our parents, presence of an austere, an honourable, or a virtuous person.* For many sins are prevented by the company of a witness; especially if, besides the ties of modesty, we have also towards him an endearment of reverence and fair opinion;³ and if he were with us in our privacies, he would cause our

¹ Acts, xvii. 27.

² Senec. lib. i. ep. 11.

³ Tacit. lib. vi. c. 51.

retirements to be more holy. St. Ambrose reports of the virgin Mary, that she had so much piety and religion in her countenance and deportment, that divers persons, moved by the veneration and regard of her person, in her presence have first commenced their resolutions of chastity and sober living. However the story be, her person certainly was of so express and great devotion and sanctity, that he must needs have been of a very impudent disposition and firm immodesty, who durst have spoken unhandsome language in the presence of so rare a person. And why then any rudeness in the presence of God, if that were as certainly believed and considered? For whatsoever amongst men can be a restraint of vice, or an endearment of virtue, all this is highly verified in the presence of God, to whom our conscience, in its very concealments, is a fair table written in capital letters by his own finger: and then, if we fail of the advantage of this exercise, it must proceed either from our dishonourable opinion of God, or our own fearless inadvertency, or from a direct spirit of reprobation. For it is certain, that this consideration is in its own nature apt to correct our manners, to produce the fear of God, and humility, and spiritual and holy thoughts, and the knowledge of God and of ourselves, and the consequents of all these, holy walking and holy comforts. And by this only argument St. Paphnutius and St. Ephrem are reported, in church-story, to have converted two harlots from a course of dissolution to great sanctity and austerity.

33. But then this presence of God must not be a mere speculation of the understanding; though so only it is of very great benefit and immediate effi-

cacy, yet it must reflect as well from the will as from discourse: and then only we walk in the presence of God, when by faith we behold him present, when we speak to him in frequent and holy prayers, when we beg aid from him in all our needs, and ask counsel of him in all our doubts, and before him bewail our sins, and tremble at his presence. This is an entire exercise of religion. And besides that the presence of God serves to all this, it hath also especial influence in the disimprovement of temptations, because it hath in it many things contrariant to the nature and efficacy of temptations; such as are consideration, reverence, spiritual thoughts, and the fear of God: for wherever this consideration is actual, there either God is highly despised, or certainly feared. In this case we are made to declare; for our purposes are concealed only in an incuriousness and inconsideration; but whoever considers God as present, will in all reason be as religious as in the temple, the reverence of which place custom or religion hath imprinted in the spirits of most men. So that as Ahasuerus said of Haman, ‘Will he ravish the queen in mine own house?’ aggravating the crime by the incivility of the circumstance, God may well say to us, whose religion compels us to believe God every where present. Since the divine presence hath made all places holy, and every place hath a *numen* in it, even the eternal God, we unhallow the place, and desecrate the ground whereon we stand, supported by the arm of God, placed in his heart, and enlightened by his eye, when we sin in so sacred a presence.

34. The second great instrument against temptation is meditation of death. Raderus reports, that

a certain virgin, to restrain the inordination of intemperate desires, which were like thorns in her flesh, and disturbed her spiritual peace, shut herself up in a sepulchre, and for twelve years dwelt in that scene of death. It were good we did so too, making tombs and coffins presential to us by frequent meditation. For God hath given us all a definitive arrest in Adam, and from it there lies no appeal; but it is infallibly and unalterably appointed for all men once to die, or to be changed; to pass from hence to a condition of eternity, good, or bad.¹ Now, because this law is certain, and the time and the manner of its execution is uncertain, and from this moment eternity depends, and that after this life the final sentence is irrevocable; that all the pleasures here are sudden, transient, and unsatisfying, and vain; he must needs be a fool that knows not to distinguish moments from eternity. And since it is a condition of necessity, established by divine decrees, and fixed by the indispensable laws of nature, that we shall after a very little duration, pass on to a condition strange, not understood, then unalterable, and yet of great mutation from this, even of greater distance from that in which we are here, than this is from the state of beasts;² this, when it is considered, must in all reason make the same impression upon our understandings and affections, which naturally all strange things and all great considerations are apt to do; that is, create resolutions and results passing through the heart of man, such as are reasonable and prudent, in order to our own felicities; that we neglect the vanities of the present temptation.

¹ Cato apud A. Gell. lib. xi. c. 2.

² Senec. Ep. 102.

and secure our future condition, which will, till eternity itself expires, remain such as we make it to be, by our deportment in this short transition and passage through the world.

35. And that this discourse is reasonable I am therefore confirmed, because I find it to be to the same purpose used by the Spirit of God, and the wisest personages in the world. ‘My soul is always in my hand, therefore do I keep thy commandments,’¹ said David. He looked upon himself as a dying person, and that restrained all his inordinations; and so he prayed, ‘Lord, teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom.’² And therefore the Egyptians used to serve up a skeleton to their feasts, that the dissolutions and vapours of wine might be restrained with that bunch of myrrh, and the vanities of their eyes chastised by that sad object:³ for they thought it unlikely a man should be transported far with any thing low or vicious, that looked long and often into the hollow eye-pits of a death’s-head, or dwelt in a charnel-house. And such considerations make all the importunity and violence of sensual desires to disband. For when a man stands perpetually at the door of eternity, and, as did John the almoner, every day is building of his sepulchre, and every night one day of our life is gone and passed into the possession of death, it will concern us to take care that the door leading to hell do not open upon us, that we be not crushed to ruin by the stones of our grave, and that our death become not

¹ Psalm cxix. 109.

² Psalm xc. 12.

³ Θάνατος πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν ἔσω σοι καθ’ ἡμέραν, καὶ ἔδεν ἐδέποτε ταπεινὸν ἐνθυμηση, ἔδὲ ἄγαν ἐπιθυμήσεις τινός. Epict. Enchir. cap. 28.

a consignation to us to a sad eternity. For all the pleasures of the whole world, and in all its duration, cannot make recompense for one hour's torment in hell :¹ and yet, if wicked persons were to sit in hell for ever, without any change of posture or variety of torment beyond that session, it were unsufferable beyond the endurance of nature. And therefore, where little less than infinite misery in an infinite duration shall punish the pleasures of sudden and transient crimes, the gain of pleasure, and the exchange of banks here for a condition of eternal and miserable death, is a permutation fit to be made by none but fools and desperate persons, who made no use of a reasonable soul, but that they in their perishing might be convinced of unreasonableness, and die by their own fault.

36. The use that wise men have made when they reduced this consideration to practice, is to believe every day to be the last of their life ; for so it may be, and for aught we know it will. And then think what you would avoid, or what you would do, if you were dying, or were to-day to suffer death by sentence and conviction ; and that in all reason, and in proportion to the strength of your consideration, you will do every day. For that is the sublimity of wisdom, to do those things living which are to be desired and chosen by dying persons.² An alarm of death, every day renewed and pressed earnestly, will watch a man so tame and

¹ *Linquenda tellus, et domus, et placens
Uxor ; neque harum, quas colis, arborum
Te, præter invisas cupressos,
Ulla brevem dominum sequetur.*

Hor. lib. ii. Od. 14.

² *Hic est apex summæ sapientiæ, ea viventem facere que morienti essent appetenda.*

soft, that the precepts of religion will dwell deep in his spirit. But they, that 'make a covenant with the grave, and put the evil day far from them,' they are the men that eat spiders and toads for meat greedily, and a temptation to them is as welcome as joy, and they seldom dispute the point in behalf of piety or mortification. For they that look upon death at a distance, apprehend it not but in such general lines and great representments that describe it only as future and possible : but nothing of its terrors, or affrightments, or circumstances of advantage are discernible by such an eye, that disturbs its sight, and discomposes the posture, that the object may seem another thing than what it is truly and really. St. Austin with his mother Monica was led one day by a Roman prætor to see the tomb of Cæsar. Himself thus describes the corpse : "It looked of a blue mould, the bone of the nose laid bare, the flesh of the nether lip quite fallen off, his mouth full of worms, and in his eye-pits two hungry toads feasting upon the remanent portion of flesh and moisture ; and so he dwelt in his house of darkness."¹ And if every person tempted by an opportunity of lust or intemperance would chose such a room for his privacy, that company for his witness, that object to allay his appetite, he would soon find his spirit more sober, and his desires obedient. I end this with the counsel of St. Bernard : "Let every man, in the first address to his actions, consider whether, if he were now to die, he might safely and prudently do such an act, and whether he would not be infinitely troubled that death should surprise him in the

¹ *Καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ σποδός εἰμι, Νίνε μεγάλης βασιλεύσας. In epitaph. Sardanapali.*

present dispositions ; and then let him proceed accordingly.”¹ For since our treasure is in earthen vessels, which may be broken in pieces by the collision of ten thousand accidents, it were not safe to treasure up wrath in them ; for if we do, we shall certainly drink it in the day of recompense.

37. Thirdly, Before, and in, and after all this, the blessed Jesus propounds prayer as a remedy against temptations : ‘ Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation.’² For besides that prayer is the great instrument of obtaining victory by the grace of God, as a fruit of our desires and of God’s natural and essential goodness, the very praying against a temptation, if it be hearty, fervent and devout, is a denying of it, and part of the victory : for it is a disclaiming the entertainment of it, it is a positive rejection of the crime ; and every consent to it is a ceasing to pray, and to desire remedy. And we shall observe, that whensoever we begin to listen to the whispers of a tempting spirit, our prayers against it lessen, as the consent increases ; there being nothing a more direct enemy to the temptation than prayer, which as it is of itself a professed hostility against the crime, so it is a calling in auxiliaries from above to make the victory more certain. If temptation sets upon thee, do thou set upon God : for he is as soon overcome as thou art, as soon moved to good as thou art to evil ;³ he is as quickly invited to pity thee, as thou

¹ In speculo monach. ‘*Ἡβώοις φίλε θυμέ· τάχ’ ἂν τινεῖς ἄλλοι ἔσονται*’ *Ἀνδρες, ἐγὼ δὲ θανὼν γαῖα μέλαιν’ ἴσονται*. Theog. Fragn.

² Matth. xxvi. 41.

³ ——— Hic levare functum

Pauperem laboribus

Vocatus atque non vocatus audit.

Hor. lib. ii. Od. 18

to ask him ; provided thou dost not finally rest in the petition, but pass into action, and endeavour, by all means human and moral, to quench the flame newly kindled in thy bowels, before it come to devour the marrow of the bones. For a strong prayer, and a lazy, incurious, unobservant walking, are contradictions in the discourses of religion. Ruffinus tells us a story of a young man solicited by the spirit of uncleanness, who came to an old religious person, and begged his prayers. It was in that age when God used to answer prayers of very holy persons by more clear and familiar significations of his pleasure than he knows now to be necessary. But after many earnest prayers sent up to the throne of grace, and the young man not at all bettered, upon consideration and inquiry of particulars, he found the cause to be, because the young man relied so upon the prayers of the old eremite, that he did nothing at all to discountenance his lust or contradict the temptation. But then he took another course, enjoined him austerities and exercises of devotion, gave him rules of prudence and caution, tied him to work and to stand upon his guard ; and then the prayers returned in triumph, and the young man trampled upon his lust.¹ And so shall I and you, by God's grace, if we pray earnestly and frequently, if we watch carefully that we be not surprised, if we be not idle in secret, nor talkative in public, if we read the Scriptures, and consult with a spiritual guide, and make religion to be our work, that serving of God be the business of our life, and our designs be to purchase eternity ; then we shall walk safely, or recover speedily, and,

¹ Lib. iii. 13.

by doing advantages to piety, secure a greatness of religion and spirituality, to our spirits and understanding. But remember, that when Israel fought against Amalek, Moses's prayer and Moses's hand secured the victory; his prayer grew ineffectual when his hands were slack: to remonstrate to us, that we must co-operate with the grace of God, praying devoutly, and watching carefully, and observing prudently, and labouring with diligence and assiduity.

THE PRAYER.

Eternal God and most merciful Father, I adore thy wisdom, providence and admirable dispensation of affairs in the spiritual kingdom of our Lord Jesus: that thou, who art infinitely good, dost permit so many sadnesses and dangers to discompose that order of things and spirits which thou didst create innocent and harmless, and dost design to great and spiritual perfections; that the emanation of good from evil, by thy overruling power and excellencies, may force glory to thee from our shame, and honour to thy wisdom by these contradictory accidents and events. Lord, have pity upon me in these sad disorders, and with mercy know my infirmities. Let me, by suffering what thou pleases, co-operate to the glorification of thy grace, and magnifying thy mercy; but never let me consent to sin; but with the power of thy majesty, and mightiness of thy prevailing mercy, rescue me from those throngs of dangers and enemies which daily seek to deflower that innocence with which thou didst clothe my soul in the new birth. Behold, O God, how all the spirits of darkness endeavour the extinction of our hopes, and the dispersion of all those graces, and the prevention of all those glories, which the holy Jesus hath purchased for every loving and obedient soul. Our very meat and drink are full of poison, our senses are snares, our business is various temptation, our sins are inlets to more, and our actions made occasions of sins. Lord, deliver me from the malice of the devil, from the fallacies of the world, from my

own folly ; that I be not devoured by the first, nor cheated by the second, nor betrayed by myself. But let thy grace, which is sufficient for me, be always present with me ; let thy Spirit instruct me in the spiritual warfare, arming my understanding, and securing my will, and fortifying my spirit with resolutions of piety and incentives of religion, and deleteries of sin ; that the dangers I am encompassed withal may become unto me an occasion of victory and triumph, through the aids of the Holy Ghost, and by the cross of the Lord Jesus, who hath for himself and all his servants triumphed over sin, and hell, and the grave, even all the powers of darkness ; from which, by the mercies of Jesus and the merits of his passion, now and ever deliver me and all thy faithful people. Amen.

DISCOURSE VI.

Of Baptism.

PART I.

1. WHEN the holy Jesus was to begin his prophetical office, and to lay the foundation of his church on the corner-stone, he first tempered the cement with water, and then with blood, and afterwards built it up by the hands of the Spirit. Himself entered at that door by which his disciples for ever after were to follow him : for therefore he went in at the door of baptism, that he might hallow the entrance which himself made to the house he was now building.

2. As it was in the old, so it is in the new creation. Out of the waters God produced every living creature : and when at first ‘ the Spirit moved upon the waters,’ and gave life, it was the type of what was designed in the renovation. Every thing

that lives now, is born of water and the Spirit: and Christ, who is our Creator and Redeemer in the new birth, opened the fountains and hallowed the stream. Christ, who is our life, went down into the waters of baptism; and we, who descend thither, find the effects of life. It is 'living water,' of which whoso drinks needs not to drink of it again; for 'it shall be in him a well of water springing up to life eternal.'¹

3. But because every thing is resolved into the same principles from whence it was taken; the old world, which by the power of God came from the waters, by their own sin fell into the waters again, and were all drowned, and only eight persons were saved by an ark. And the world, renewed upon the stock and reserves of that mercy, consigned the sacrament of baptism in another figure: for then God gave his sign from heaven, that by water the world should never again perish; but he meant, that they should be saved by water; for 'baptism, which is a figure like to this, doth also now save us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.'²

4. After this, the Jews report, that the world took up the doctrine of baptisms, in remembrance that the iniquity of the old world was purged by water: and they washed all that came to the service of the true God, and by that baptism bound them to the observation of the precepts which God gave to Noah.

5. But when God separated a family for his own special service, he gave them a sacrament of initiation; but it was a sacrament of blood, the covenant of circumcision. And this was the forerunner of

¹ John, iv. 14.

² 1 Pet. iii. 21.

baptism, but not a type: when that was abrogated, this came into the place of it; and that consigned the same faith which this professes. But it could not properly be a type, whose nature is by a likeness of matter or ceremony to represent the same mystery. Neither is a ceremony, as baptism truly is, properly capable of having a type; itself is but a type of a greater mysteriousness. And the nature of types is, in shadow to describe by dark lines a future substance.¹ So that although circumcision might be a type of the effects and graces bestowed in baptism; yet of the baptism or ablution itself it cannot be properly, because of the unlikeness of the symbols and configurations, and because they are both equally distant from substances, which types are to consign and represent. The first bishops of Jerusalem, and all the Christian Jews, for many years, retained circumcision together with baptism; and Christ himself, who was circumcised, was also baptized: and therefore it is not so proper to call circumcision a type of baptism. It was rather a seal and sign of the same covenant to Abraham and the fathers and to all Israel, as baptism is to all ages of the Christian church.

6. And because this rite could not be administered to all persons, and was not at all times after its institution, God was pleased, by a proper and specific type, to consign this rite of baptism, which he intended to all, and that for ever: and God, when the family of his church grew separate, notorious, numerous, and distinct, sent them into their own country by a baptism through which the whole nation passed; for 'all the fathers were under the

¹ *Umbra in lege, imago in evangelio, veritas in cælo.* S. Ambr.

cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.'¹ So by a double figure foretelling, that as they were initiated to Moses's law by the cloud above and the sea beneath, so should all the persons of the church, men, women, and children, be initiated unto Christ by the Spirit from above and the water below. For it was the design of the apostle in that discourse, to represent that the fathers and we were equal as to the privileges of the covenant: he proved that we do not exceed them, and it ought therefore to be certain that they do not exceed us, nor their children ours.

7. But after this, something was to remain which might not only consign the covenant which God made with Abraham, but be as a passage from the fathers through the synagogue to the church, from Abraham by Moses to Christ; and that was circumcision, which was a rite which God chose to be a mark to the posterity of Abraham, to distinguish them from the nations which were not within the covenant of grace; and to be a seal of the righteousness of faith, which God made to be the spirit and life of the covenant.

8. But because circumcision, although it was ministered to all the males, yet it was not to the females, although they and all the nation were baptized and initiated into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; therefore the children of Israel, by imitation of the patriarchs, the posterity of Noah, used also ceremonial baptisms to their women and to their proselytes, and to all that were circumcised. And the Jews deliver, that Sarah and Rebecca,

¹ 1 Cor. x. 1, 2.

when they were adopted into the family of the church, that is, of Abraham and Isaac, were baptized; and so were all strangers that were married to the sons of Israel. And that we may think this to be typical of Christian baptism, the doctors of the Jews had a tradition, that when the Messias would come, there should be so many proselytes, that they could not be circumcised, but should be baptized. The tradition proved true, but not for their reason.

But that this rite of admitting into mysteries, and institutions, and offices of religion, by baptisms, was used by the posterity of Noah, or at least very early among the Jews, besides the testimonies of their own doctors, I am the rather induced to believe, because the heathens had the same rite in many places, and in several religions. So they initiated disciples into the secrets of Mithra; ¹ and the priests of Cotytto were called Baptæ,² because by baptism they were admitted into the religion. And they thought murder, incest, rapes, and the worst of crimes, were purged by dipping in the sea or fresh springs.³ And a proselyte is called, in Arrianus, Βεβαμμένος, *intinctus*, a baptized person.

9. But this ceremony of baptizing was so certain and usual among the Jews in their admitting proselytes and adopting into institutions, that to baptize and to make disciples are all one. And when John the Baptist, by an order from heaven, went to prepare the way to the coming of our blessed Lord, he preached repentance, and baptized all

¹ Tertul. de Præscript. c. 40.

² Scholiast. in Juv. Sat. 2, lib. i.

³ O nimium faciles, qui tristia crimina cædis tolli flumineâ posse putatis. aquâ!

that professed they did repent. He taught them to live good lives, and baptized with the baptism of a prophet; such as was not usually done by ordinary and holy persons in the change or turning of discipline or religion. Whether 'baptism was from heaven, or of men,' Christ testified to the Pharisees. That it was from heaven he therefore believed, because he was a prophet and a holy person: but it implies also, that such baptisms are sometimes from men, that is, from persons of an eminent religion or extraordinary fame, for the gathering of disciples and adding of proselytes. And the disciples of Christ were baptized too; even before Christ had instituted the sacrament for the Christian church, the disciples who came to Christ were baptized by his apostles.

10. And now we are come to the gates of baptism. All these till John were but types and preparatory baptisms, and John's baptism was but the preparation to the baptism of Christ. The Jewish law admitted proselytes to Moses and to the ceremonies: John's baptism called them to repentance in the Messiah now appearing, and to receive forgiveness of their sins, to enter into the kingdom which was now at hand, and preached that repentance should be for the remission of sins. His baptism remitted no sins, but preached and consigned to repentance, which in the belief of the Messiah, he pointed to, should pardon sins. But before he was taken from his office before the work was completed, the disciples of Christ finished it.

¹ John, iv. 2.

² Audi quid Scripturæ doceant: Joannis baptismum non carnalis dimisit, quàm baptismum poenitentiae fuit in peccatorum remissionem, idque in futuram remissionem quæ esset postea per purificationem Christi subsequutura. Hieronym. adv. Lu

went forth preaching the same sermon of repentance, and the approach of the kingdom, and baptized, or made proselytes or disciples, as John did; only they (as it is probable) baptized in the name of Jesus, which it is not so likely John did. And this very thing might be the cause of the different forms of baptism recorded in the Acts;¹ of ‘baptizing in the name of Jesus,’² and at other times ‘in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost:’³ the former being the manner of doing it in pursuance of the design of John’s baptism, and the latter the form of institution by Christ for the whole Christian church, appointed after his resurrection: the disciples at first using promiscuously what was used by the same authority, though with some difference of mystery.

11. The holy Jesus having found his way ready prepared by the preaching of John and by his baptism, and the Jewish manner of adopting proselytes and disciples into the religion, a way chalked out for him to initiate disciples into his religion, took what was so prepared, and changed it into a perpetual sacrament. He kept the ceremony, that they who were led only by outward things might be the better called in, and easier enticed into the religion, when they entered by a ceremony which their nation always used in the like cases: and therefore, without change of the outward act, he put into it a new spirit, and gave it a new grace and a proper efficacy; he sublimed it to higher

—“Hear what the Scriptures teach: the baptism of John did not remit sins; but was rather a baptism in order to the remission of sins, and for that future remission which should be attainable through the sanctification of Christ.”

¹ Vide *suprà*, sect. 9, n. 1.

² Acts, viii. 16; ii. 38.

³ Matt. xxviii. 19.

ends, and adorned it with stars of heaven ; he made it to signify greater mysteries, to convey greater blessings, to consign the bigger promises, to cleanse deeper than the skin, and to carry proselytes further than the gates of the institution. For so he was pleased to do in the other sacrament : he took the ceremony which he found ready in the custom of the Jews, where the *major-domo* after the paschal supper, gave bread and wine to every person of his family ; he changed nothing of it without, but transferred the rite to greater mysteries, and put his own Spirit to their sign, and it became a sacrament evangelical. It was so also in the matter of excommunication, where the Jewish practice was made to pass into Christian discipline. Without violence and noise old things became new, while he fulfilled the law, making it up in full measures of the Spirit.

12. By these steps baptism passed on to a divine evangelical institution, which we find to be consigned by three Evangelists. ‘Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Holy Ghost.’¹ It was one of the last commandments the holy Jesus gave upon the earth, when he taught his apostles ‘the things which concerned his kingdom.’ For, ‘He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved :’² but, ‘unless a man be born of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven ;’³ agreeable to the decretory words of God by Abraham in the circumcision, to which baptism does succeed in the consignation of the same covenant and the same spiritual promises : ‘The un-

¹ Matt. xxviii. 19.

² Mark, xvi. 16.

³ John, iii. 5.

circumcised child whose flesh is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.’¹ The Manichees, Seleucus, Hermias, and their followers, people of a day’s abode and small interest, but of malicious doctrine, taught baptism not to be necessary, not to be used, upon this ground, because they supposed that it was proper to John to ‘baptize with water,’ and reserved for Christ, as his peculiar, to ‘baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire.’² Indeed Christ baptized none otherwise; he sent his Spirit upon the church in Pentecost, and baptized them with fire, the Spirit appearing like a flame: but he appointed his apostles to baptize with water, and they did so, and their successors after them, every where and for ever, not expounding but obeying the preceptive words of their Lord, which were almost the last that he spake upon earth. And I cannot think it needful to prove this to be necessary by any more arguments; for the words are so plain, that they need no exposition: and yet, if they had been obscure, the universal practice of the apostles and the church for ever is a sufficient declaration of the commandment. No tradition is more universal, no, not of Scripture itself; no words are plainer, no, not the ten commandments: and if any suspicion can be superinduced by any jealous or less discerning person, it will need no other refutation, but to turn his eyes to those lights by which himself sees Scripture to be the word of God, and the commandments to be the declaration of his will.

13. But that which will be of greatest concern-

¹ Gen. xvii. 14.

² S. Aug. Hæres. 46. 59.

ment in this affair, is, to consider the great benefits that are conveyed to us in this sacrament; for this will highly conclude that the precept was for ever, which God so seconds with his grace and mighty blessings; and the susception of it necessary, because we cannot be without those excellent things which are the graces of the sacrament.

14. First, The fruit is, that 'in baptism we are admitted to the kingdom of Christ,' presented unto him, consigned with his sacrament, enter into his militia, give up our understandings and our choice to the obedience of Christ, and in all senses that we can, become his disciples, witnessing a good confession and undertaking a holy life. And therefore in Scripture μαθητεύειν and βαπτίζειν are conjoined in the significations, as they are in the mystery. It is a giving up our names to Christ, and it is part of the foundation or the first principles of the religion, as appears in St. Paul's catechism: ¹ it is so the first thing, that it is for babes and neophytes, in which they are matriculated and adopted into the house of their father, and taken into the hands of their mother. Upon this account baptism is called in antiquity, *Ecclesiæ janua, porta gratiæ, et primus introitus sanctorum ad æternam Dei et ecclesiæ consuetudinem*; ² "the gate of the church, the door of grace, the first entrance of the saints to an eternal conversion with God and the church." *Sacramentum initiationis, et intrantium Christianismum investituram*, St. Bernard calls it: "the sacrament of initiation, and the investiture of them that enter into the religion." And the person so entering is called περεισμένος and συγκρατη-

¹ Heb. vi. 1, 2.

² S. Aug. lib. ii. c. 1, de Catech. Rudib.

μένος,¹ one of the religion, or a proselyte and convert, and one added to the number of the church; in imitation of that of St. Luke, Ὁ Κύριος προσετίθει σωζομένους τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, 'God added to the church those that should be saved:'² just as the church does to this day and for ever, baptizing infants and catechumens: σωζόμενοι προσίθονται, they are added to the church, that they may be added to the Lord, and the number of the inhabitants of heaven.

15. Secondly, The next step beyond this is adoption into the covenant,³ which is an immediate consequent of the first presentation; this being the first act of man, that, the first act of God. And this is called by St. Paul a being 'baptized in one Spirit into one body;'⁴ that is, we are made capable of the communion of saints, the blessings of the faithful, the privileges of the church. By this we are, as St. Luke calls it, τεταγμένοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον, 'ordained or disposed, put into the order of eternal life,'⁵ being made members of the mystical body under Christ our head.

16. Thirdly, And therefore baptism is a new birth, by which we enter into the new world, the new creation, the blessings and spiritualities of the kingdom. And this is the expression which our Saviour himself used to Nicodemus: 'Unless a man be born of water and the Spirit.'⁶ And it is by St. Paul called λουτρὸν παλιγγενεσίας, 'the laver of regeneration.'⁷ For now we begin to be reckoned

¹ Just. Martyr. Apol. ii.

² Acts, ii. 47.

³ Τὸ βάπτισμα ἐ υιοθεσίας χάριν τυγχάνειν. Cyr. I. Hierosol. Catech. 2.

⁴ 1 Cor. xii. 13.

⁵ Acts, xiii. 48.

⁶ John, iii. 5.

⁷ Titus, iii. 5. Διὰ Βαπτισμὸν ἀρχὴ ἑτέρα βίη γίνεται ἡμῖν, ἡ παλιγγενεσία, ἐ σφραγίς ἐ φυλακτήριον, ἐ φωτισμός. Damasc. lib. iv. Orth. fid. c. 10.

in a new *census* or account; God is become our father, Christ our elder brother, the Spirit the earnest of our inheritance, the church our mother; our food is the body and blood of our Lord, faith is our learning, religion our employment, and our whole life is spiritual, and heaven the object of our hopes, and the mighty price of our high calling. And from this time forward we have a new principle put into us, the Spirit of grace, which, besides our soul and body, is a principle of action, of one nature, and shall with them enter into the portion of our inheritance. And therefore the primitive Christians, who consigned all their affairs and goods and writings with some marks of their Lord, usually writing 'Ιησὺς Χριστὸς, Θεοῦ Υἱὸς, Σωτὴρ, "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Saviour," made it an abbreviature, by writing only the capitals thus, I. X. Θ. Υ. Σ, which the heathens in 'mockery and derision made 'Ιχθὺς, which signifies a fish, and they used it for Christ, as a name of reproach. But the Christians owned the name, and turned it into a pious metaphor, and were content that they should enjoy their pleasure in the acrostic. But upon that occasion Tertullian speaks pertinently to this article, *Nos pisciculi, secundum ἰχθὺν nostrum Jesum Christum, in aqua nascimur* :¹ "Christ, whom you call a fish, we acknowledge to be our Lord and Saviour; and we, if you please, are the little fishes, for we are born in water, thence we derive our spiritual life." And because from henceforward we are a new creation, the church uses to assign new relations to the catechumens, spiritual fathers, and susceptors; and, at their entrance into

¹ Lib. de Baptist. c. 1.

baptism, the Christian and Jewish proselytes did not seem to cancel all secular affections to their temporal relatives. *Nec quicquam prius imbuuntur quam contemnere Deos, exuere, patriam, parentes, liberos, fratres vilia habere*, said Tacitus of the Christians.¹ Which was true in the sense only that Christ said, 'He that doth not hate father or mother for my sake, is not worthy of me;' that is, He that doth not hate them *præ me*, rather than forsake me for-
sake them, is unworthy of me.

17. Fourthly, In baptism all our sins are pardoned, according to the words of a prophet, 'I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness.'² "The catechumen descends into the font a sinner, he arises purified; he goes down the son of death, he comes up the son of the resurrection; he enters in the son of folly and prevarication, he returns the son of reconciliation; he stoops down the child of wrath, and ascends the heir of mercy; he was the child of the devil, and now he is the servant and the Son of God." They are the words of venerable Bede concerning this mystery.³ And this was ingeniously signified by that Greek inscription upon a font, which is so prettily contrived, that the words may be read after the Greek or after the Hebrew manner, and be exactly the same; ΝΙΨΟΝ ΑΝΟΜΗΜΑ, ΜΗ ΜΟΝΑΝ ΟΨΙΝ, "Lord, wash my sin, and not my face only." And so it is intended and promised. 'Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, and call on the name of

¹ Lib. v. Hist.

² Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Πιστεύω ἐν βάπτισμα εἰς ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν. Symb. Nicen.

³ Lib. i. c. 3. in Joann.

the Lord,'¹ said Ananias to Saul. For Christ 'loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it,' τῷ λουτρῷ τῷ ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι, 'with the washing of water in the word';² that is, baptism in the Christian religion. And therefore Tertullian calls baptism *lavacrum compendiatum*,³ a compendious laver; that is, an entire cleansing the soul in that one action justly and rightly performed. In the rehearsal of which doctrine it was not an unpleasant etymology that Anastasius Sinaita gave of baptism, βάπτισμα quasi πάπταισμα, ἐν ᾧ βάλλεται, ἥγυν πίπτει, τὸ πταῖσμα, in which our sins are thrown off: and they fall like leeches when they are full of blood and water, or like the chains from St. Peter's hands at the presence of the angel. Baptism is ἀνεκλόγιστος ἀφεσις ἁμαρτιῶν, an entire, full forgiveness of sins, so that they shall never be called again to scrutiny.

————— Omnia dæmonis arma
His merguntur aquis, quibus ille renascitur infans
Qui captivus erat⁴—————

The captivity of the soul is taken away by the blood of redemption, and the fiery darts of the devil are quenched by these salutary waters; and

¹ Acts, xxii. 16.

² Eph. v. 25, 26.

³ Lib. v. adv. Marc. c. 9. Θάλασσα κλύζει πάντα, τῶν ἀνθρώπων κακά. Gr. prov. Annon ità credimus, quia omne genus peccati, cū ad salutare lavacrum venimus, aufertur?—Origen. Hom. 15, in Josu. Ecce quicquid iniquitatum sempiternus ignis excoquere et expiare vix posset, subito sacro fonte submersum est, et de æternis debitis brevissimo lavacri compendio cum indulgentissimo creditore transactum est.—Ambrose, l. i. c. 7, de Pœnit. Qui dicit peccata in baptismo non fuditus dimitti, dicat in mari rubro Ægyptios non veraciter motuos.—S. Greg. M. l. ix. ep. 39.

⁴ Arator, lib. ii. Hist. Apost.

that the flames of hell are expiating or punishing eternal ages, that is washed off quickly in the holy font, and an eternal debt paid in an instant. Or so sure as the Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea, so sure are our sins washed in this holy flood. For this is a red sea too; these waters signify the blood of Christ; 'These are they that have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'¹ *Τὸ αἷμα καθαρίζει, τὸ ὕδωρ καθαρίζει, καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα ἀγνίζει τὸ αἷμα διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος, τὸ πνεῦμα διὰ τοῦ ὕδατος*, 'The blood of Christ cleanseth us, the water cleanseth us, the Spirit purifieth us; the blood by the Spirit, the Spirit by the water;'² all in baptism, and in pursuance of that baptismal state. 'These three are they that bear record in earth, the Spirit, the water, and the Word;'³ *καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἓν εἰσι*, 'and these three agree in one,' or are to one purpose;³ and they agree in baptism, and in the whole pursuance of the assistances which a Christian needs all the days of his life. And therefore St. Cyril calls baptism *τῶν Χριστοῦ παθημάτων ἀντίτυπον*, the antitype of the sufferings of Christ. It does preconsign the death of Christ, and does the infancy of the work of grace, but not weakly; it brings from death to life: and though it brings us but to the birth in the new life, yet this is a greater change than is in all the periods of our growth to manhood, to a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

18. Fifthly, Baptism does not only pardon our sins, but puts us into a state of pardon for the time to come. For baptism is the beginning of the new life, and an admission of us into the evangelical

¹ Rev. vii. 14.

² 1 John i. 7; Acts xxii. 16; Tit. iii. 5; Heb. ix. 14.

³ 1 John v. 8.

covenant; which on our parts consists in a sincere and timely endeavour to glorify God by faith and obedience; and on God's part, he will pardon what is past, assist us for the future, and not measure us by grains and scruples, or exact our duties by the measure of an angel, but by the span of a man's hand. So that by baptism we are consigned to the mercies of God, and the graces of the gospel; that is, that our pardon be continued, and our piety be a state of repentance. And therefore, that baptism which in the Nicene creed we profess to be for the remission of sins, is called in the Jerusalem creed, the baptism of repentance; that is, it is the entrance of a new life, the gate to a perpetual change and reformation, all the way continuing our title to the hopes of forgiveness of sins. And this excellency is clearly recorded by St. Paul: 'The kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man hath appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done;' ¹ that is the formality of the gospel covenant, not to be exacted by the strict measures of the law; but according to his mercy he saved us; that is, by gentleness and remissions, by pitying and pardoning us, by relieving and supporting us; because he remembers that we are but dust; and all this mercy we are admitted to, and is conveyed to us, *διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας*, by the laver of regeneration, and the renewing the Holy Ghost. And this plain evident doctrine was observed, explicated, and urged against the Messalians, who said that baptism was like a razor, that cuts away all the sins that were past, or presently adhering, but not the sins of our future life. Οὐδὲ γὰρ τῆτο μόνον ἐπαγγελ-

¹ Tit. iii. 4, 5.

λεται τὸ μυστήριον, ἀλλὰ τὰ τέτων μείζω ἢ τελειότερα· ἀράβων γὰρ ἐστὶ τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν ἢ τῆς ἐσομένης ἀναστάσεως τύπος, ἢ κοινωνία τῶν δεσποτικῶν παθημάτων, ἢ μεθεστία τῆς δεσποτικῆς ἀναστάσεως, ἢ ἱμάτιον σωτηρίας, ἢ χιτῶν εὐφροσύνης, ἢ πολλή φωτοειδής, μᾶλλον δὲ αὐτὸ φῶς.¹ “This sacrament promises more and greater things; it is the earnest of future good things, the type of the resurrection, the communication of the Lord’s passion, the partaking of his resurrection, the robe of righteousness, the garment of gladness, the vestment of light, or rather light itself.” And for this reason it is that baptism is not to be repeated, because it does at once all that it can do at an hundred times: for it admits us to the condition of repentance and evangelical mercy, to a state of pardon for our infirmities and sins, which we timely and effectually leave; and this is a thing that can be done but once, as a man can begin but once. He that hath once entered in at this gate of life, is always in possibility of pardon, if he be in a possibility of working and doing after the manner of a man that which he hath promised to the Son of God. And this was expressly delivered and observed by St. Austin;² “That which the apostle says, ‘Cleansing him with the washing of water in the word,’ is to be understood, that in the same laver of regeneration and word of sanctification all the evils of the regenerate are cleansed and healed; not only the sins that are past, which are all now remitted in baptism, but also those that are contracted afterwards by human ignorance and infirmity: not that baptism be repeated as

¹ Theodor. Ep. de Div. decr. cap. de Bapt.

² Lib. de Nuptiis, c. 23, et Tract. 124, in Joan.

often as we sin,¹ but because by this, which is once administered, is brought to pass that pardon of all sins, not only of those that are past, but also those which will be committed afterwards, is obtained." The Messalians denied this, and it was part of their heresy in the undervaluing of baptism; and for it they are most excellently confuted by Isidore Pelusiot, in his third book, 195th Epistle to the Count Hermin, whither I refer the reader.

19. In proportion to this doctrine it is that the holy Scripture calls upon us to live a holy life, in pursuance of this grace of baptism. And St. Paul recalls the lapsed Galatians to their covenant, and the grace of God stipulated in baptism: 'Ye are all children of God by faith in Jesus Christ;' ² that is, 'heirs of the promise,' and 'Abraham's seed;' that promise which cannot be disannulled, increased, or diminished, but is the same to us as it was to Abraham, the same before the law and after. Therefore do not you hope to be justified by the law, for you are entered into the covenant of faith, and are to be justified thereby. This is all your hope, by this you must stand for ever, or you cannot stand at all; but by this you may: for 'you are God's children by faith;' that is, not by the law, or the covenant of works. And that you may remember whence you are going, and return again, he proves that they are the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ, because they 'have been baptized into Christ,' and so 'put on Christ.' This makes you children, and such as are to be 'saved by faith;' that is, a covenant, 'not of works,' but of pardon in 'Jesus Christ,' the author and esta-

¹ Vide Salmer. tom. xiii. p. 487.

³ Ib. verse 29.

² Gal. iii. 26.

⁴ Ib, verse 27.

blisher of this covenant. For this is the covenant, made in baptism, that ‘being justified by his grace, we shall be heirs of life eternal : for by grace,’ that is, by favour, remission, and forgiveness in Jesus Christ, ‘ye are saved.’ This is the only way that we have of being justified, and this must remain as long as we are in hopes of heaven ; for besides this we have no hopes : and all this is stipulated and consigned in baptism, and is of force after our fallings into sin and risings again. In pursuance of this the same apostle declares, that the several states of sin are so many recessions from the state of baptismal grace ; and if we arrive to the direct apostacy, and renouncing of, or a contradiction to the state of baptism, we are then unpardonable, because we are fallen from our state of pardon. This St. Paul conditions most strictly in his epistle to the Hebrews. ‘This is the covenant I will make in those days : I will put my laws in their hearts ; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.’¹ That is, our sins are so pardoned that we need no more oblation, we are then made partakers of the death of Christ ; which we afterwards renew in memory, and eucharist, and representment. But the great work is done in baptism ; for so it follows, ‘having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way ;’ that is, ‘by the veil of his flesh,’² his incarnation. But how do we enter into this ? Baptism is the door, and the ground of this confidence for ever : for so he adds, ‘Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having

¹ Heb. x. 16, &c.² Ib. verse 10, &c.

our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.' This is the consignation of this blessed state, and the gate to all this mercy. 'Let us hold fast the profession of our faith ;'¹ that is, the religion of a Christian, the faith into which we were baptized ; for that is the faith that justifies and saves us : Let us therefore hold fast this profession of this faith, and do all the intermedial works in order to the conservation of it, such as are 'assembling in the communion of saints,'² (the use of the word and sacrament is included in the precept,) 'mutual exhortation, good example,' and the like. 'For, if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth ;' that is, if we sin against the profession of this faith, and hold it not fast, but let the faith and the profession go wilfully, (which afterwards he calls 'a treading under foot the Son of God, accounting the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing,' and 'a doing despite to the Spirit of grace,'³ viz. which moved upon those waters, and did illuminate him in baptism ;) if we do this, there is no more sacrifice for sins, no more deaths of Christ into which you may be baptized ; that is, you are fallen from the state of pardon and repentance into which you were admitted in baptism, and in which you continue so long as you have not quitted your baptismal rites and the whole covenant. Contrary to this is that which St. Peter calls 'making our calling and election sure ;' that is, a doing all that which may continue us in our state of baptism and the grace of the covenant.

¹ Τῆς ἐλπίδος, scil. ad futurum respiciens.

² Ἐπισυναγωγή, παράκλησις, κατανόησις.

³ Heb. x. 29.

And between these two states of absolute apostacy from, and entirely adhering to and securing this state of calling and election, are all the intermedial sins, and being overtaken in single faults, or declining towards vicious habits, which in their several proportions are degrees of danger and security; which St. Peter calls *λήθην καθαρισμῶ τῶν παλαιῶν αὐτῶν ἁμαρτιῶν*, ‘a forgetting our baptism’ or ‘purification from our sins.’ And in this sense are those words, ‘The just shall live by faith;’ that is, by that profession which they made in baptism; from which, if they swerve not, they shall be supported in their spiritual life. It is a grace which, by virtue of the covenant consigned in baptism, does like a centre transmit effluxes to all the periods and portions of our life; our whole life, all the periods of our succeeding hopes are kept alive by this. This consideration is of great use, besides many other things, to reprove the folly of those who in the primitive church deferred their baptism till their death-bed: because baptism is a laver of sanctification, and drowns all our sins, and buries them in the grave of our Lord, they thought they might sin securely upon the stock of an after-baptism; for unless they were strangely prevented by a sudden accident, a death-bed baptism they thought would secure their condition. But early some of them durst not take it, much less in the beginning of their years, that they might at least gain impunity for their follies and heats of their youth. Baptism hath influence into the pardon of all our sins committed in all the days of our folly and in-

¹ 2 Pet. i. 9. vide Par. ii. Disc. 9, of Repentance, numb. 9, ad 31.

firmity; and so long as we have not been baptized, so long we are out of the state of pardon: and therefore an early baptism is not to be avoided upon this mistaken fancy and plot upon heaven; it is the greater security towards the pardon of our sins, if we have taken it in the beginning of our days.

20. Fifthly, 'The next benefit of baptism, which is also a verification of this, is a sanctification of the baptized person by the Spirit of grace.

*Sanctus in hunc cœlo descendit Spiritus amnem,
Cœlestique sacras fonte maritat aquas:
Concipit unda Deum, sanctamque liquoribus almis
Edit ab æterno semine progeniem.'*

The Holy Ghost descends upon the waters of baptism, and makes them prolific, apt to produce children unto God. And therefore St. Leo compares the font of baptism to the womb of the blessed virgin when it was replenished with the Holy Spirit. And this is the baptism of our dearest Lord: his ministers baptize with water, our Lord at the same time verifies their ministry with giving the Holy Spirit. They are joined together by St. Paul: 'We are by one Spirit baptized into one body;' ² that is, admitted into the church by baptism of water and the Spirit. This is that which our blessed Lord calls a being 'born of water and of the Spirit:' ¹ by water we are sacramentally dead and buried, by the Spirit we are made alive. But because these are mysterious expressions, and, according to the style of Scripture, high and secret in spiritual significations, therefore, that we may understand what these things signify, we must consider it by its real

¹ Paul. Ep. xii. ad Serenum.

² 1 Cor. xii. 13.

³ John, iii. 5. S. Basil. de Spir. S. c. 15.

effects, and what it produces upon the soul of a man.

21. First, It is the suppletory of original righteousness, by which Adam was at first gracious with God, and which he lost by his prevarication. It was in him a principle of wisdom and obedience, a relation between God and himself, a title to the extraordinary mercies of God, and a state of friendship. When he fell, he was discomposed in all, the links of the golden chain and blessed relation were broken : and it so continued in the whole life of man, which was stained with the evils of this folly and the consequent mischiefs. And therefore when we began the world again, entering into the articles of a new life, God gave us his Spirit to be an instrument of our becoming gracious persons, and of being in a condition of obtaining that supernatural end which God at first designed to us. And therefore as our baptism is a separation of us from unbelieving people, so the descent of the Holy Spirit upon us in our baptism is a consigning or marking us for God, as the sheep of his pasture, as the soldiers of his army, as the servants of his household : we are so separated from the world, that we are appropriated to God, so that God expects of us duty and obedience ; and all sins are acts of rebellion and undutifulness. Of this nature was the sanctification of Jeremy and John the Baptist from their mothers' wombs ; that is, God took them to his own service by an early designation, and his Spirit marked them to a holy ministry. To this also relates that of St. Paul, whom God, by a decree, separated from his mother's womb to the ministry of the gospel : the decree did antedate the act of the Spirit, which did not descend upon him

until the day of his baptism. What these persons were in order to exterior ministries, that all the faithful are in order to faith and obedience, consigned in baptism by the Spirit of God to a perpetual relation to God, in a continual service and title to his promises. And in this sense the Spirit of God is called σφραγίς, ‘a seal;’ ‘in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.’¹ Τὸ μὲν ὕδωρ καθαίρει, τὸ δε πνεῦμα σφραγίζει τὴν ψυχὴν. “The water washes the body, and the Spirit seals the soul,” viz. to a participation of those promises which he hath made, and to which we receive a title by our baptism.

22. Secondly, The second effect of the Spirit is light or illumination; that is, the Holy Spirit becomes unto us the author of holy thoughts and firm persuasions, and sets to his seal that the word of God is true, into the belief of which we are then baptized, and makes faith to be a grace, and the understanding resigned, and the will confident, and the assent stronger than the promises, and the propositions to be believed, because they are beloved; and we are taught the ways of godliness after a new manner; that is, we are made to perceive the secrets of the kingdom, and to love religion, and to long for heaven and heavenly things, and to despise the world, and to have new resolutions, and new perceptions, and new delicacies, in order to the establishment of faith and its increments and perseverance. Τῇ λαμπέσῃ ψυχῇ ἀπὸ κατακλυσμῆ ἀνιδρυθῆς ὁ Θεὸς, οἷον εἰ θρόνον αὐτῇ ἐαυτῷ κατεργάζεται.² “God sits in the soul when it is illuminated in baptism,

¹ 2 Cor. i. 22; Eph. iv. 30; John vi. 27.

² Eph. i. 13. S. Cyril. Hieros. Catech. iii.

³ S. Basil. in Psalm. xxviii.

as if he sat in his throne ;” that is, he rules by a firm persuasion and entire principles of obedience. And therefore baptism is called in Scripture *φωτισμός*, and the baptized *φωτισθέντες*, ‘illuminated ;’ ‘Call to mind the former days in which you were illuminated :’¹ and the same phrase is in the sixth to the Hebrews,² where the parallel places expound each other. For that which St. Paul calls *ἅπαξ φωτισθέντες*, ‘once illuminated,’ he calls after, *λαβόντες τὴν ἐπιγνώσιν τῆς ἀληθείας*, ‘a receiving the knowledge of the truth.’ And that you may perceive this to be wholly meant of baptism, the apostle expresses it still by synonymas, ‘tasting of the heavenly gift, and made partakers of the Holy Ghost, sprinkled in our hearts from an evil conscience, and washed in our bodies with pure water :’³ all which also are a syllabus or collection of the several effects of the graces bestowed in baptism. But we are now instancing in that which relates most properly to the understanding ; in which respect the Holy Spirit also is called ‘anointing’ or ‘unction :’ and the mystery is explicated by St. John, ‘the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you ; and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things.’⁴

23. Thirdly, ‘The Holy Spirit descends upon us in baptism, to become the principle of a new life,’ to become ‘a holy seed,’ springing up to holiness ; and is called by St. John *σπέρμα Θεοῦ*, ‘the seed of God :’⁵ and the purpose of it we are taught by him, ‘Whosoever is born of God’ (that is, he that is regenerated and entered into this new birth) ‘doth not

¹ Heb. x. 32.² Verse 4.³ Heb. vi. 4.⁴ 1 John, ii. 20, 27.⁵ 1 John, iii. 9.

commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.' The Spirit of God is the Spirit of life; and now that he by the Spirit is born anew, he hath in him that principle which, if it be cherished, will grow up to life, to life eternal. And this is, 'the Spirit of sanctification, the victory over the world,' the delectory of concupiscence, the life of the soul, and the perpetual principle of grace sown in our spirits in the day of our adoption to be the sons of God, and members of Christ's body. But take this mystery in the words of St. Basil: "There are two ends proposed in baptism; to wit, to abolish the body of sin, that we may no more bring forth fruit unto death; and to live in the Spirit, and to have our fruit to sanctification. The water represents the image of death, receiving the body in its bosom, as in a sepulchre: but the quickening Spirit sends upon us a vigorous *δύναμιν*, power or efficacy, even from the beginning renewing our souls from the death of sin unto life. For as our mortification is perfected in the water, so the Spirit works life in us."¹ To this purpose is the discourse of St. Paul; having largely discoursed of our being baptized into the death of Christ, he adds this as the corollary of all.² 'He that is dead is free from sin;' that is, being mortified and 'buried in' the waters of 'baptism,'³ we have a 'new life' of righteousness put into us; we are quitted from the dominion of sin, and are 'planted together in the likeness of Christ's resurrection,'⁴ that henceforth we should not serve sin.'⁵

¹ Lib. de Spir. S. c. 18.

² Rom. vi. 7.

³ Ibid. verse 4.

⁴ Verse 5.

⁵ Verse 6. Vide Disc. 9, of Repentance, n. 46.

24. Fourthly, But all these intermedial blessings tend to a glorious conclusion; for baptism does also consign us to a holy resurrection. It takes the sting of death from us, by burying us together with Christ; and takes off sin, which is the sting of death, and then we shall be partakers of a blessed resurrection. This we are taught by St. Paul: ‘Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? for if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.’¹ That declares the real event in its due season. But because baptism consigns it, and admits us to a title to it, we are said, with St. Paul, to be risen with Christ in baptism; buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, which hath raised him from the dead.’² Which expression I desire to be remembered, that by it we may better understand those other sayings of the apostle, of ‘putting on Christ in baptism, putting on the new man,’ &c. for these only signify *ἐπιχείλημα*, or the design on God’s part, and the endeavour and duty on man’s: we are then consigned to our duty, and to our reward; we undertake one, and have a title to the other. And though men of openness and reason enter instantly into their portion of work, and have present use of the assistances, and something of their reward in hand; yet we cannot conclude, that those that cannot do it presently are not baptized rightly, because they are not in capacity to ‘put on the new man,’ in righteousness; that is, in an actual holy life. For

¹ Rom. vi. 3, 5.

² Col. ii. 12.

they may ' put on the new man' in baptism, just as ' they are risen with Christ.' Which because it may be done by faith before it is done in real event, and it may be done by sacrament and design before it be done by a proper faith ; so also may our putting on the new man be : it is done sacramentally ; and that part which is wholly the work of God does only antedate the work of man, which is to succeed in its due time, and is after the manner of preventing grace. But this by the by. In order to the present articles, baptism is by Theodoret called *μεθεσία τῆς δεσποτικῆς ἀναστάσεως*, " a participation of the Lord's resurrection."

25. Fifthly and lastly, ' By baptism we are saved ; that is, we are brought from death to life here, and that is ' the first resurrection : ' and we are brought from death to life hereafter, by virtue of the covenant of the state of grace into which in baptism we enter, and are preserved from the ' second death,' and receive a glorious and an eternal life. ' He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,' said our blessed Saviour ; and ' according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.'¹

26. After these great blessings so plainly testified in Scripture and the doctrine of the primitive church, which are regularly consigned and bestowed in baptism, I shall less need to descend to temporal blessings or rather contingencies, or miraculous events, or probable notices of things less certain. Of this nature are those stories recorded in the writings of the church, that Constantine was cured of a leprosy in baptism ;² Theodosius recovered

¹ Mark, xvi. 16.

² Tit. iii. 5.

³ Niceph. lib. vii. c. 35.

of his disease, being baptized by the bishop of Thessalonica:¹ and a paralytic Jew was cured as soon as he became a Christian, and was baptized by Atticus of C P.;² and bishop Arnulph baptizing a leper also cured him, said Vincentius Bellovacensis. It is more considerable which is generally and piously believed by very many eminent persons in the church, that at our baptism God assigns an angel guardian, for then the catechumen, being made a servant and a brother to the Lord of angels, is sure not to want the aids of them who ‘pitch their tents round about them that fear the Lord;’³ and that this guard and ministry is then appointed when themselves are admitted into the inheritance of the promises: and their title to salvation is hugely agreeable to the words of St. Paul: ‘Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?’⁴ where it appears, that the title to the inheritance is the title to this ministry, and therefore must begin and end together. But I insist not on this, though it seems to me hugely probable. All these blessings put into one syllabus, have given to baptism many honourable appellatives in Scripture and other divine writers, calling it ἀναγέννησιν παλιγγενεσίαν, ὄχημα πρὸς Θεόν, ὄχημα πρὸς ἑρανόν, βασιλείας προέξονον, τὴν κλεῖδα τῆς βασιλείας τῶν ἑρανῶν, μεγάλην περιτομήν ἀχειροποίητον, ἀνακαίνωσιν, ἀγαθῆς συνειδήσεως ἐπερώτημα, ἀρράβῳ ἐνέχυρον, ἀπόδειξιν, ἀνάκτισιν, ἔνδυμα φωτεινόν,⁵ “ *sacramentum vitæ et æternæ salutis*; a new birth, a regene-

¹ Socr. lib. v. c. 6.² Idem. lib. vii. c. 7.³ Psalm xxxiv. 7.⁴ Heb. i. 14.⁵ Basil. Theod. Epiphan. Nazianz. Col. ii. 2. Cyril. Hieros. Dionys. Areop. Aug. lib. ii. c. 13. contra Crescon. Gram.

ration, a renovation, a chariot carrying us to God, the great circumcision, a circumcision made without hands, the key of the kingdom, the *paranymphe* of the kingdom, the earnest of our inheritance, the answer of a good conscience, the robe of light, the sacrament of a new life and of eternal salvation." *Ἀριστον μὲν ὕδωρ.* This is celestial water, springing from the sides of the rock upon which the church was built, when the rock was smitten with the rod of God.

27. It remains now that we enquire what concerns our duty, and in what persons or in what disposition baptism produces all these glorious effects: for the sacraments of the church work in the virtue of Christ, but yet only upon such as are servants of Christ, and hinder not the work of the Spirit of grace. For the water of the font and the Spirit of the sacrament are indeed to wash away our sins, and to purify our souls; but not unless we have a mind to be purified. The sacrament works pardon for them that hate their sin, and procures grace for them that love it. They that are guilty of sins must repent of them, and renounce them and they must make a profession of the faith of Christ; and give or be given up to the obedience of Christ, and then they are rightly disposed. 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,' saith Christ; and St. Peter called out to the whole assembly, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you.' Concerning this Justin Martyr gives the same account of the faith and practice of the church; *Ὅσοι ἂν πεισθῶσι καὶ πισεύωσιν, &c.*³ "Whosoever are persuaded and believe those things to be true which are delivered and spoken by us, and under-

¹ Mark, xvi. 16.

² Acts, ii. 38.

³ Apol. ad Anton. Cap.

take to live accordingly, they are commanded to fast and pray, and to ask of God remission for their former sins, we also praying together with them, and fasting. Then they are brought to us where water is, and are regenerated in the same manner of regeneration by which we ourselves are regenerated." For in baptism St. Peter observes there are two parts, the body and the spirit. That is *σαρκὸς ἀπόθεσις ῥυποῦ*, 'the putting away the filth of the flesh ;'¹ that is, the material washing ; and this is baptism no otherwise than a dead corpse is a man : the other is *συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα* 'the answer of a good conscience towards God ;' that is, the conversion of the soul to God : that is the effective disposition in which baptism does save us. And in the same sense are those sayings of the primitive doctors to be understood, *Anima non lavatione, sed responsione, sancitur* ;² the soul is not healed by washing, viz. alone, but by the answer, the *ἐπερώτημα* in St. Peter, the correspondent of our part of the covenant ; for that is the perfect sense of this unusual expression. And the effect is attributed to this, and denied to the other, when they are distinguished. So Justin Martyr affirms : " The only baptism that can heal us is repentance and the knowledge of God. For what need is there of that baptism that can only cleanse the flesh and the body ? Be washed in your flesh from wrath and covetousness, from envy and hatred ; and behold the body is pure."³ And Clemens Alexandrinus upon that proverbial saying, *Ἴσθι μὴ λετρωῖ ἀλλὰ νόῳ καθαρὸς*, 'Be not pure in the laver, but in the mind,' adds, " I suppose that an exact and a firm

¹ 1 Pet. iii. 21.² Tert. de Res. Carn.³ Ad. Tryphon. Jud.

*Quisquis in hos fontes vir venerit, exeat indè
Semideus, tactis citò nobilitetur in undis.*

28. This is the whole doctrine of baptism, as it is in itself considered, without relation to rare circumstances or accidental cases. And it will also serve to the right understanding of the reasons why the church of God hath in all ages baptized all persons that were within her power, from whom the church could stipulate that they were or might be relatives of Christ, sons of God, heirs of the promises, and partners of the covenant, and such as did not hinder the work of baptism upon their souls. And such were not only persons of age and choice, but the infants of Christian parents. For the understanding and verifying of which truth, I shall only need to apply the parts of the former discourse to their particular case, premising first these propositions.

Of Baptizing Infants.

PART II.

1. BAPTISM is the key in Christ's hand, and therefore opens as he opens, and shuts by his rule: and as Christ himself did not do all his blessings and effects unto every one, but gave to every one as they had need; so does baptism. Christ did not cure all men's eyes, but them only that were blind; 'Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance:' that is, they that lived in the fear of God, according to the covenant in which they were debtors, were indeed improved and promoted higher by Christ; but not

called to that repentance to which he called the vicious Gentiles, and the adulterous persons among the Jews, and the hypocritical Pharisees. There are some so innocent that they need no repentance, saith the Scripture: meaning, that though they do need contrition for their single acts of sin, yet they are within the state of grace, and need not repentance as it is a conversion of the whole man. And so it is in baptism, which does all its effects upon them that need them all, and some upon them that need but some: and therefore, as it pardons sins to them that have committed them, and do repent and believe; so to the others, who have not committed them, it does all the work which is done to the others above or besides that pardon.

2. Secondly, When the ordinary effect of a sacrament is done already by some other efficiency or instrument, yet the sacrament is still as obligatory as before, not for so many reasons or necessities, but for the same commandment. Baptism is the first ordinary current in which the Spirit moves and descends upon us; and where God's Spirit is, they are the sons of God, for Christ's Spirit descends upon none but them that are his: and yet Cornelius, who had received the Holy Spirit, and was heard by God, and visited by an angel, and accepted in his alms and fastings and prayers, was tied to the susception of baptism.¹ To which may be added, that the receiving the effects of baptism beforehand was used as an argument the rather to administer baptism. The effect of which consideration is this, that baptism and its effects may be separated, and do not always go in conjunction:

¹ Acts, x. 47.

the effect may be before, and therefore much rather may it be after its susception; the sacrament operating in the virtue of Christ, even as the Spirit shall move; according to that saying of St. Austin, *Sacrosancto lavacro inchoata innovatio novi hominis perficiendo perficitur in aliis citius in aliis tardius:*¹ and St. Bernard, *Lavari quidem citò possumus, sed ad sanandum multâ curatione opus est.*² The work of regeneration, that is begun in the ministry of baptism, is perfected in some sooner, in some later: we may soon be washed, but to be healed is a work of a long cure.

3. Thirdly, The dispositions which are required to the ordinary susception of baptism, are not necessary to the efficacy, or required to the nature of the sacrament, but accidentally, and because of the superinduced necessities of some men: and therefore the conditions are not regularly to be required. But in those accidents it was necessary for a Gentile proselyte to repent of his sin, and to believe in Moses's law, before he could be circumcised. But Abraham was not tied to the same conditions, but only to faith in God; but Isaac was not tied to so much; and circumcision was not of Moses, but of the fathers: and yet, after the sanction of Moses's law, men were tied to conditions, which were then made necessary to them that entered into the covenant, but not necessary to the nature of the covenant itself. And so it is in the susception of baptism: if a sinner enters into the font, it is necessary he be stripped of those appendages which himself sewed upon his nature. and then repentance is a necessary disposition: it

¹ Aug. de moribus Eccles. Cath. lib. i. c. 35.

² Bern. Serm. de Cœna Dom.

his understanding hath been a stranger to religion, polluted with evil principles and a false religion, it is necessary he have an actual faith, that he be given in his understanding up to the obedience of Christ. And the reason of this is plain, because in these persons there is a disposition contrary to the state and effects of baptism ; and therefore they must be taken off by their contraries, faith, and repentance, that they may be reduced to the state of pure receptives. And this is the sense of those words of our blessed Saviour, ‘ Unless ye become like one of these little ones, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven ;’ that is, ye cannot be admitted into the gospel-covenant, unless all your contrarieties and impediments be taken from you, and you be as apt as children to receive the new immissions from heaven. And this proposition relies upon a great example, and a certain reason. The example is our blessed Saviour, who was *Nullius penitentiae debitor*, he had committed no sin, and needed no repentance ; he needed not to be saved by faith, for of faith he was the author and finisher, and the great object, and its perfection and reward : and yet he was baptized by the baptism of John, the baptism of repentance. And therefore it is certain that repentance and faith are not necessary to the susception of baptism, but necessary to some persons that are baptized. For it is necessary we should much consider the difference. If the sacrament by any person may be justly received in whom such dispositions are not to be found, then the dispositions are not necessary or intrinsic to the susception of the sacrament : and yet some persons coming to this sacrament may have such necessities of their own as will

make the sacrament ineffectual without positions. These I call necessary to¹ but not to the sacrament; that is, hept such, but not necessary to all absolute faith is necessary sometimes where not, sometimes repentance and faith together sometimes otherwise. When Philip he eunuch, he only required of him to believe and repent.² But St. Peter, when he preached to the Jews and converted them, only required of them faith;³ which, although it in their case implied repentance, yet there was no explicit stipulation. They had 'crucified the Lord of life,'⁴ and would come to God by baptism, they must first repent of their sin; that was all that was then required. It is as the case is, or as the persons induce necessities upon themselves. In the case is evident as to the one part equally required—I mean repentance; the other of which cannot prejudice them as to the reception of baptism, because they, having done it, are not bound to repent: and to repentance is necessary to the susception of baptism. But this shows that they are accidentally that is, not absolutely, not to all, not to all. And if they may be excused from one duty which is indispensably necessary to baptism, why not from the other, is a secret which is not found out by these whom it concerns to.

4. And therefore, when our blessed Lord has made a stipulation and express commandment with the greatest annexed penalty to the contrary, it not, 'he that believeth not shall be damned.'

¹ Acts, viii. 37.² Acts, ii. 38.³ Acts

proposition is not to be verified or understood as relative to every period of time ; for then no man could be converted from infidelity to the Christian faith, and from the power of the devil to the kingdom of Christ, but his present infidelity shall be his final ruin. It is not therefore γνώμη, but χρεία, not a sentence, but a use, a prediction and intermination. It is not like that saying, God is true, and every man a liar, and every good and every perfect gift is from above ; for these are true in every instant, without reference to circumstances ; but ‘ he that believeth not shall be damned,’ is a prediction, or that which in rhetoric is called χρεία, or a use, because this is the affirmation of that which usually or frequently comes to pass ; such as this, “ he that strikes with the sword shall perish by the sword ; he that robs a church shall be like a wheel,” of a vertiginous and unstable estate ; “ he that loves wine and oil, shall not be rich :” and therefore it is a declaration of that which is universally or commonly true ; but not so, that in what instant soever a man is not a believer, in that instant it is true to say he is damned ; for some are called at the third, some the sixth, some the ninth hour, and they that come in, being first called, at the eleventh hour, shall have their reward. So that this sentence stands true at the day and the judgment of the Lord, not at the judgment or day of man. And in the same necessity as faith stands to salvation, in the same it stands to baptism, that is, to be measured by the whole latitude of its extent. Our baptism shall no more do all its intentions, unless faith supervene, than a man is in possibility of being saved without faith : it must come in its due time, but is not indispensably necessary

in all instances and periods. Baptism is the seal of our election and adoption; and as election is brought to effect by faith and its consequents, so is baptism: but to neither is faith necessary as to its beginning and first entrance. To which also I add this consideration, that actual faith is necessary, not to the susception, but to the consequent effects of baptism, appears, because the church, and particularly the apostles, did baptize some persons who had not faith, but were hypocrites; such as were Simon Magus, Alexander the coppersmith, Demas and Diotrephes; and such was Judas when he was baptized, and such were the Gnostic teachers. For the effect depends upon God, who knows the heart, but the outward susception depends upon them who do not know it: which is a certain argument, that the same faith which is necessary to the effect of the sacrament, is not necessary to its susception: and if it can be administered to hypocrites, much more to infants; if to those who really hinder the effect, much rather to them that hinder not. And if it be objected, that the church does not know but the pretenders have faith, but she knows infants have not; I reply, that the church does not know but the pretenders hinder the effect, and are contrary to the grace of the sacrament, but she knows that infants do not: the first possibly may receive the grace, the other cannot hinder it.

5. But besides these things it is considerable, that, when it is required, persons have faith. It is true, they that require baptism should give a reason why they do; so it was in the case of the eunuch baptized by Philip: but this is not to be required of others that do not ask it, and yet they

may be of the church, and of the faith. For by faith is also understood the Christian religion, and the Christian faith is the Christian religion; and of this a man may be, though he make no confession of his faith; as a man may be of the church, and yet not be of the number of God's secret ones; and to this more is required than to that. To the first it is sufficient, that he be admitted by a sacrament or a ceremony: which is infallibly certain, because hypocrites and wicked people are in the visible communion of the church, and are reckoned as members of it, and yet to them there was nothing done but the ceremony administered. And therefore, when that is done to infants, they also are to be reckoned in the church-communion. And indeed, in the examples of Scripture, we find more inserted in the number of God's family by outward ceremony than by the inward grace. Of this number were all those who were circumcised the eighth day, who were admitted thither, as the woman's daughter was cured in the gospel; by the faith of their mother, their natural parents, or their spiritual; to whose faith it is as certain God will take heed, as to their faith who brought one to Christ who could not come himself, the poor paralytic; for when Christ saw their faith, he cured their friend. And yet it is to be observed, that Christ did use to exact faith, actual faith, of them that came to him to be cured: 'According to your faith be it unto you.'¹ The case is equal in its whole kind. And it is considerable what Christ saith to the poor man that came in behalf of his son: 'All things are possible to him that believeth:'² it is

¹ Matt. ix. 29.² Mark, ix. 23.

possible for a son to receive the blessing and benefit of his father's faith ; and it was so in his case, and is possible to any ; for ' to faith all things are possible.' And as to the event of things, it is evident in the story of the gospel, that the faith of their relatives was equally effective to children and friends or servants, absent or sick, as the faith of the interested person was to himself ; as appears beyond all exception in the case of the friends of the paralytic, let down with cords through the tiles ; of the centurion, in behalf of his servant ;¹ of the nobleman, for his son sick at Capernaum ;² of the Syrophenician, for her daughter. And Christ required faith of no sick man, but of him that presented himself to him, and desired for himself that he might be cured ;³ as it was in the case of the blind man. Though they could not believe, yet Christ required belief of them that came to him on their behalf : and why then it may not be so, or is not so, in the case of infants' baptism, I confess it is past my skill to conjecture. The reason on which this further relies is contained in the next proposition.

6. Fourthly, No disposition or act of man can deserve the first grace, or the grace of pardon : for so long as a man is unpardoned, he is an enemy to God, and as a dead person, and, unless he be prevented by the grace of God, cannot do a single act in order to his pardon and restitution : so that the first work which God does upon a man is so wholly his own, that the man hath nothing in it, but to entertain it, that is, not to hinder the work of God upon him. And this is done in them that have in

¹ Matt. viii. 13.

² John, iv. 50.

³ Matt. ix. 28.

them nothing that can hinder the work of grace, or in them who remove the hinderances. Of the latter sort are all sinners, who have lived in a state contrary to God: of the first, are they who are prevented by the grace of God before they can choose; that is, little children, and those that become like unto little children. So that faith and repentance are not necessary at first to the reception of the first grace, but by accident. If sin have drawn curtains, and put bars and coverings to the windows, these must be taken away; and that is done by faith and repentance: but if the windows be not shut, so that the light can pass through them, the eye of heaven will pass in and dwell there. 'No man can come unto me unless my Father draw him;'¹ that is, the first access to Christ is nothing of our own, but wholly of God; and it is as in our creation, in which we have an obediential capacity, but co-operate not: only if we be contrary to the work of grace, that contrariety must be taken off, else there is no necessity. And if all men, according to Christ's saying, must 'receive the kingdom of God as little children,'² it is certain little children do receive it; they receive it as all men ought, that is, without any impediment or obstruction, without any thing within that is contrary to that state.

7. Fifthly, Baptism is not to be estimated as one act, transient, and effective to single purposes; but it is an entrance to a conjugation and a state of blessings. All our life is to be transacted by the measures of the gospel-covenant, and that covenant is consigned by baptism, there we have our title

¹ John, vi. 44.

² Mark, x. 15.

and adoption to it: and the grace that is th
 given to us is like a pīce of leven put into a lun
 of dough, and faith and repentance do in all t
 periods of our life put it into fermentation a
 activity. Then the seed of God is put into t
 ground of our hearts, and repentance waters it, a
 faith makes it *subactum solum*, the ground a
 furrows apt to produce fruits: and therefore fai
 and repentance are necessary to the effect of ba
 tism, not to its susception; that is, necessary
 all those parts of life in which baptism does op
 rate, not to the first sanction or entering into t
 covenant. The seed may lie long in the groun
 and produce fruits in its due season, if it be r
 freshed with the former and the latter rain; that
 the repentance that first changes the state, a
 converts the man, and afterwards returns him
 his title, and recalls him from his wanderings, a
 keeps him in the state of grace, and within t
 limits of the covenant: and all the way faith giv
 efficacy and acceptation to this repentance; that
 continues our title to the promise of not havi
 righteousness exacted by the measures of the la
 but by the covenant and promise of grace, in
 which we entered in baptism, and walk in the sar
 all the days of our life.

8. Sixthly, The Holy Spirit which descends up
 the waters of baptism, does not instantly produ
 its effects in the soul of the baptized; and when
 does, it is irregularly, and as he pleases. ‘T
 Spirit bloweth where it listeth, and no man kno
 eth whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth.’ At
 the catechumen is admitted into the kingdom, y
 ‘the kingdom of God cometh not with observ

tion.’¹ And this saying of our blessed Saviour was spoken of ‘the kingdom of God that is within us;’² that is, the Spirit of grace, the power of the gospel put into our hearts, concerning which he affirmed, that it operates so secretly that it comes not with outward show; ‘neither shall they say, Lo here, or lo there.’ Which thing I desire the rather to be observed, because in the same discourse, which our blessed Saviour continued to that assembly, he affirms this ‘kingdom of God’ to belong unto ‘little children,’³ this ‘kingdom that cometh not with outward significations’ or present expresses, this ‘kingdom’ that ‘is within us.’ For the present the use I make of it is this, that no man can conclude that this kingdom of power, that is, the Spirit of sanctification, is not come upon infants, because there is no sign or expression of it. It is within us, therefore it hath no signification. It is the seed of God; and it is no good argument to say, Here is no seed in the bowels of the earth, because there is nothing green upon the face of it. For the church gives the sacrament, God gives the grace of the sacrament: but because he does not always give it at the instant in which the church gives the sacrament, (as if there be a secret impediment in the suscipient,) and yet afterwards does give it when the impediment is removed, (as to them that repent of that impediment,) it follows, that the church may administer rightly even before God gives the real grace of the sacrament. And if God gives this grace afterwards by parts, and yet all of it is the effect of that covenant which was consigned in baptism; he that defers some may

¹ Luke, xvii. 20.² Verse 21.³ Luke, xviii. 16.

defer all, and verify every part as well as any part. For it is certain, that in the instance now made, all the grace is deferred; in infants it is not certain but that some is collated or infused; however, be it so or no, yet upon this account the administration of the sacrament is not hindered.

9. Seventhly, When the Scripture speaks of the effects of, or dispositions to baptism, it speaks in general expressions, as being most apt to signify a common duty, or a general effect, or a more universal event, or the proper order of things: but those general expressions do not *supponere universaliter*; that is, are not to be understood exclusively to all that are not so qualified, or universally of all suscipients, or of all the subjects of the proposition. When the prophets complain of the Jews, that they are fallen from God, and turned to idols, and walk not in the way of their fathers; and at other times the Scripture speaks the same thing of their fathers, that they walked perversely towards God, 'starting aside like a broken bow;' in these and the like expressions the holy Scripture uses a *synecdoche*, or signifies many only, under the notion of a more large and indefinite expression: for neither were all the fathers good, neither did all the sons prevaricate; but among the fathers there were enough to recommend to posterity by way of example, and among the children there were enough to stain the reputation of the age; but neither the one part nor the other was true of every single person. St. John the Baptist spake to the whole audience, saying, '(O generation of vipers!' and yet he did not mean that all Jerusalem and Judæa that 'went out to be baptized of him' were such: but he, under an undeterminate reproof, intended

those that were such, that is, especially the priests and the Pharisees. And it is more considerable yet in the story of the event of Christ's sermon in the synagogue, upon his text taken out of Isaiah : ' All wondered at his gracious words, and bare him witness ;'¹ and a little after, ' All they in the synagogue were filled with wrath : ' that is, it was generally so, but hardly to be supposed true of every single person, in both the contrary humours and usages. Thus Christ said to the apostles, ' Ye have abidden with me in my temptations ;' and yet Judas was all the way a follower of interest and the bag, rather than Christ ; and afterwards none of them all did abide with Christ in his greatest temptations. Thus also, to come nearer the present question, the secret effects of election and of the Spirit are in Scripture attributed to all that are of the outward communion. So St. Peter calls all the Christian strangers of the eastern dispersion, ' elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father ;'² and St. Paul saith of all the Roman Christians, and the same of the Thessalonians, that their ' faith was spoken of in all the world : ' and yet among them it is not to be supposed that all the professors had an unreprouvable faith, or that every one of the church of Thessalonica was an excellent and a charitable person ; and yet the apostle useth this expression, ' Your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all towards each other aboundeth.'³ These are usually significant of a general custom, or order of things, or duty of men, or design, and natural or proper expectation of events. Such are these in this very question,

¹ Luke, iv. 22, 28.² 1 Pet. i. 2.³ 1 Thes. i. 3.

‘As many of you as are baptized into Christ have put on Christ;’ that is, so it is regularly, and so it will be in its due time, and that is the order of things, and the designed event. But from hence we cannot conclude of every person, and in every period of time, This man hath been baptized, therefore now he is clothed with Christ, he hath put on Christ; nor thus, This person cannot in a spiritual sense as yet put on Christ, therefore he hath not been baptized; that is, he hath not put him on in a sacramental sense. Such is the saying of St. Paul, ‘Whom he hath predestinated, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified:’¹ this also declares the regular event, or at least the order of things, and the design of God, but not the actual verification of it to all persons. These sayings concerning baptism in the like manner are to be so understood, that they cannot exclude all persons from the sacrament that have not all those real effects of the sacrament at all times which some men have at some times, and all men must have at some time or other, viz. when the sacrament obtains its last intention. But he that shall argue from hence that children are not rightly baptized, because they cannot in a spiritual sense put on Christ, concludes nothing, unless these propositions did signify universally, and at all times, and in every person, and in every manner: which can no more pretend to truth, than that all Christians are God’s elect, and all that are baptized are saints, and all that are called are justified, and all that are once justified shall be saved finally. These

¹ Rom. viii. 30.

things declare only the event of things, and their order, and the usual effect, and the proper design in their proper season, in their limited proportions.

10. Eighthly, A negative argument for matters of fact in Scripture cannot conclude a law, or a necessary or a regular event: and therefore, supposing that it be not intimated that the apostles did baptize infants, it follows not that they did not; and if they did not, it does not follow that they might not, or that the church may not. For it is unreasonable to argue, the Scripture speaks nothing of the baptism of the holy virgin mother, therefore she was not baptized. The words and deeds of Christ are infinite which are not recorded, and of the acts of the apostles we may suppose the same in their proportion: and therefore what they did not is no rule to us, unless they did it not because they were forbidden. So that it can be no good argument to say, the apostles are not read to have baptized infants, therefore infants are not to be baptized; but thus, we do not find that infants are excluded from the common sacraments and ceremonies of Christian institution, therefore we may not presume to exclude them: for although the negative of a fact is no good argument, yet the negative of a law is a very good one. We may not say, the apostles did not, therefore we may not; but thus, they were not forbidden to do it, there is no law against it, therefore it may be done. No man's deeds can prejudicate a divine law expressed in general terms, much less can it be prejudiced by those things that were not done. 'That which is wanting cannot be numbered,'¹ cannot be

¹ Eccles. i. 15.

effectual; therefore, 'baptize all nations,' must signify all that it can signify, all that are reckoned in the capitations and accounts of a nation. Now since all contradiction to this question depends wholly upon these two grounds, the negative argument in matter of fact, and the pretences that faith and repentance are required to baptism; since the first is wholly nothing, and infirm upon an infinite account, and the second may conclude that infants can no more be saved than be baptized, because faith is more necessary to salvation than to baptism; it being said, 'He that believeth not shall be damned,' and it is not said, 'He that believeth not shall be excluded from baptism;' it follows that the doctrine of those that refuse to baptize their infants is upon both its legs weak and broken and insufficient.

11. Upon the supposition of these grounds, the baptism of infants, according to the perpetual practice of the church of God, will stand firm and unshaken upon its own base. For, as the eunuch said to Philip, 'What hinders them to be baptized?' If they can receive benefit by it, it is infallibly certain, that it belongs to them also to receive it, and to their parents to procure it; for nothing can deprive us of so great a grace but an unworthiness, or a disability. They are not disabled to receive it, if they need it, and if it does them good; and they have neither done good nor evil, and therefore they have not forfeited their right to it. This therefore shall be the first great argument or combination of inducements:—infants receive many benefits by the susception of baptism, and therefore, in charity and in duty, we are to bring them to baptism.

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12. First, The first effect of baptism is, that in it we are admitted to the kingdom of Christ, offered and presented unto him. In which certainly there is the same act of worship to God, and the same blessing to the children of Christians, as there was in presenting the first-born among the Jews; for our children can be God's own portion as well as theirs. And as they presented the first-born to God, and so acknowledged that God might have taken his life in sacrifice, as well as the sacrifice of the lamb or the oblation of a beast; yet when the right was confessed, God gave him back again, and took a lamb in exchange, or a pair of doves; so are our children presented to God as forfeit, and God might take the forfeiture, and not admit the babe to the promises of grace; but when the presentation of the child and our acknowledgment is made to God, God takes the lamb of the world in exchange, and he hath paid our forfeiture, and the children are holy unto the Lord. And what hinders here? Cannot a cripple receive an alms at the beautiful gate of the temple, unless he go thither himself? or cannot a gift be presented to God by the hands of the owners, and the gift become holy and pleasing to God, without its own consent? The parents have a portion of the possession: children are blessings, and God's gifts, and the father's greatest wealth, and therefore are to be given again to him. In other things we give something to God of all that he gives us; all we do not, because our needs force us to retain the greater part, and the less sanctifies the whole: but our children must all be returned to God; for we may love them, and so may God too, and they are the better our own by being made holy in their presentation. Whatso-

ever is given to God is holy, every thing in its proportion and capacity : a lamb is holy when it becomes a sacrifice, and a table is holy when it becomes an altar, and an house is holy when it becomes a church, and a man is holy when he is consecrated to be a priest, and so is every one that is dedicated to religion : these are holy persons, the others are holy things. And infants are between both : they have the sanctification that belongs to them, the holiness that can be of a reasonable nature offered and destined to God's service ; but not in that degree that is in an understanding, choosing person. Certain it is that infants may be given to God ; and if they may be, they must be : for it is not here as in goods, where we are permitted to use all or some, and give what portion we please out of them ; but we cannot do our duty towards our children, unless we give them wholly to God, and offer them to his service and to his grace. The first does honour to God, the second does charity to the children : the effects and real advantages will appear in the sequel. In the meantime this argument extends thus far, that children may be presented to God acceptably in order to his service. And it was highly preceptive, when our blessed Saviour commanded that we should 'suffer little children to come to' him : and when they came, they carried away a blessing along with them. He was desirous they should partake of his merits : he is not willing, neither is it his Father's will, that any of these little ones should perish ; and therefore he died for them, and loved and blessed them : and so he will now, if they be brought to him, and presented as candidates of the religion and of the resurrection. Christ hath a blessing for

our children ; but let them come to him ; that is, be presented at the doors of the church to the sacrament of adoption and initiation ; for I know no other way for them to come.

13. Secondly, Children may be adopted into the covenant of the gospel ; that is, ‘ made partakers of the communion of saints,’ (which is the second effect of baptism,) parts of the church, members of Christ’s mystical body, and put into the order of eternal life. Now, concerning this, it is certain the church clearly hath power to do her offices in order to it. The faithful can pray for all men, they can do their piety to some persons with more regard and greater earnestness, they can admit whom they please in their proper dispositions to a participation of all their holy prayers, and communions, and preachings, and exhortations : and if all this be a blessing, and all this be the actions of our own charity, who can hinder the church of God from admitting infants to the communion of all their pious offices, which can do them benefit in their present capacity ? How this does necessarily infer baptism I shall afterwards discourse ;¹ but for the present I enumerate, that the blessings of baptism are communicable to them : they may be admitted into a fellowship of all the prayers and privileges of the church, and the communion of saints, in blessings, and prayers, and holy offices. But that which is of greatest persuasion and convincing efficacy in this particular is, that the children of the church are as capable of the same covenant as the children of the Jews : but it was the same covenant that circumcision did consign, a spiritual

¹ Sect. 25, &c.

covenant under a veil, and now it is the same spiritual covenant without the veil; which is evident to him that considers it thus:—

14. The words of the covenant are these: ‘I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect: I will multiply thee exceedingly: thou shalt be the father of many nations: thy name shalt not be Abram, but Abraham: nations and kings shall be out of thee: I will be a God unto thee, and unto thy seed after thee: and, I will give all the land of Canaan to thy seed: and, all the males shall be circumcised; and it shall be a token of the covenant between me and thee: and, he that is not circumcised shall be cut off from his people.’ The covenant which was on Abraham’s part was, to ‘walk before God, and to be perfect;’ on God’s part, to bless him with a numerous issue, and them with the land of Canaan; and the sign was circumcision, the token of the covenant.¹ Now in all this there was no duty to which the posterity was obliged, nor any blessing which Abraham could perceive or feel, because neither he nor his posterity did enjoy the promise for many hundred years after the covenant: and therefore as there was a duty for the posterity which is not here expressed, so there was a blessing for Abraham, which was concealed under the leaves of a temporal promise, and which we shall better understand from them whom the Spirit of God hath taught the mysteriousness of this transaction. The argument indeed and the observation is wholly St. Paul’s: Abraham and the patriarchs ‘died in faith, not having received the promises,’² viz. of a possession

¹ Gen. xvii. 1, &c.

² Heb. xi. 13.

in Canaan. They ‘saw the promises afar off,’ they embraced them, and looked through the cloud, and the temporal veil: this was not it. They might have returned to Canaan,¹ if that had been the object of their desires, and the design of the promise; but they ‘desired and did seek a country,’ but it was ‘a better, and that a heavenly.’² This was the object of their desire, and the end of their search, and the reward of their faith, and the secret of their promise. And therefore ‘circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith which he had before his circumcision,’³ before the making of this covenant; and therefore it must principally relate to an effect and a blessing greater than was afterwards expressed in the temporal promise; which effect was ‘forgiveness of sins,’⁴ a not imputing to us our infirmities, justification by faith, ‘accounting that for righteousness.’⁵ And these effects or graces were promised to Abraham, not only for his posterity ‘after the flesh,’ but his children ‘after the Spirit,’ even to all that shall believe and ‘walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he walked in being yet uncircumcised.’⁶

15. This was no other but the covenant of the gospel, though afterwards otherwise consigned. For so the apostle expressly affirms, that ‘Abraham was the father of circumcision,’ (viz. by virtue of this covenant,) ‘not only to them that are circumcised, but to all that believe,’⁷ for this promise was not through the law of works, or of circumcision, ‘but of faith.’⁸ And therefore, as St. Paul observes, God promised that Abraham should

¹ Heb. xi. 15.² Ib. verse 14, 16.³ Rom. iv. 11.⁴ Ib. verse 7.⁵ Ib. verse 3, 5.⁶ Ib. verse 12.⁷ Ib. verse 11, 12. ⁸ Ib. verse 13.

be a father (not of that nation only, but) ‘ of many nations, and the heir of the world ;’¹ that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ :’² that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. ‘ And if ye be Christ’s, then ye are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.’³ Since then the covenant of the gospel is the covenant of faith, and not of works; and the promises are spiritual, not secular; and Abraham the father of the faithful Gentiles as well as of the circumcised Jews; and the heir of the world; not by himself, but by his seed, or the Son of man, our Lord Jesus; it follows, that the promises which circumcision did seal were the same promises which are consigned in baptism : the covenant is the same, only that God’s people are not impaled in Palestine, and the veil is taken away, and the temporal is passed into spiritual : and the result will be this, “ That to as many persons, and in as many capacities, and in the same dispositions as the promises were applied and did relate in circumcision, to the same they do belong and may be applied in baptism.”⁴ And let it be remembered, that the covenant which circumcision did assign, was a covenant of grace and faith; the promises were of the Spirit, or spiritual; it was made before the law, and could not be rescinded by the legal covenant; nothing could be added to it, or taken from it; and we that are partakers of this grace, are therefore partakers of it by being Christ’s servants, united to Christ, and so are become Abraham’s seed, (as the apostle at large and professedly proves in divers places, but especially in the fourth

¹ Rom. iv. 17, 13.² Gal. iii. 14.³ Ib. verse 29.⁴ Epiphan. lib. i. Hæres. 8. scil. Epicureor.

to the Romans, and the third to the Galatians.) And therefore, if infants were then admitted to it, and consigned to it by a sacrament which they understood not any more than ours do, there is not any reason why ours should not enter in at the ordinary gate and door of grace as well as they. Their children were circumcised the eighth day, but were instructed afterwards, when they could enquire what these things meant. Indeed their proselytes were first taught, then circumcised; so are ours baptized: but their infants were consigned first; and so must ours.

16. Thirdly, In baptism we are born again; and this infants need in the present circumstances, and for the same great reason that men of age and reason do: for our natural birth is either of itself insufficient, or is made so by the fall of Adam and the consequent evils, that nature alone, or our first birth, cannot bring us to heaven, which is a supernatural end; that is, an end above all the power of our nature as now it is. So that if nature cannot bring us to heaven, grace must, or we can never get thither; if the first birth cannot, a second must: but the second birth spoken of in Scripture is baptism: 'A man must be born of water and the Spirit.' And therefore baptism is *λουτρόν παλιγγενεσίας*, the laver of a new birth. Either, then, infants cannot go to heaven any way that we know of, or they must be baptized. To say they are to be left to God, is an excuse and no answer; for when God hath opened the door, and calls that the entrance into heaven, we do not leave them to God, when we will not carry them to him in the way which he hath

¹ Tit. iii. 5.

described, and at the door which himself hath opened. We leave them indeed, but it is but helpless and destitute: and though God is better than man, yet that is no warrant to us; what it will be to the children, that we cannot warrant or conjecture. And if it be objected, that to the new birth are required dispositions of our own, which are to be wrought by and in them that have the use of reason; besides that this is wholly against the analogy of a new birth, in which the person to be born is wholly a passive, and hath put into him the principle that in time will produce its proper actions, it is certain that they that can receive the new birth are capable of it. The effect of it is a possibility of being saved, and arriving to a supernatural felicity. If infants can receive this effect, then also the new birth, without which they cannot receive the effect. And if they can receive salvation, the effect of the new birth, what hinders them but they may receive that that is in order to that effect, and ordained only for it, and which is nothing of itself, but in its institution and relation, and which may be received by the same capacity in which one may be created; that is, a passivity, or a capacity obediencial?

17. Fourthly, Concerning pardon of sins, which is one great effect of baptism, it is certain that infants have not that benefit which men of sin and age may receive. He that hath a sickly stomach drinks wine, and it not only refreshes his spirit, but cures his stomach: he that drinks wine and hath not that disease, receives good by his wine, though it does not minister to so many needs; it refreshes, though it does not cure him. And when oil is poured upon a man's head, it does not always heal a wound, but sometimes makes him a

cheerful countenance, sometimes it consigns him to be a king or a priest. So it is in baptism: it does not heal the wounds of actual sins, because they have not committed them; but it takes off the evil of original sin. Whatsoever is imputed to us by Adam's prevarication, is washed off by the death of the second Adam, into which we are baptized.¹ But concerning original sin, because there are so many disputes which may intricate the question, I shall make use only of that which is confessed on both sides, and material to our purpose. Death came upon all men by Adam's sin, and the necessity of it remains upon us as an evil consequent of the disobedience. For though death is natural, yet it was kept off from man by God's favour; which when he lost, the banks were broken, and the water reverted to its natural course, and our nature became a curse, and death a punishment. Now that this also relates to infants so far is certain, because they are sick, and die. 'This the Pelagians denied not.'² But to whomsoever this evil descended, for them also a remedy is provided by the second Adam; that 'as in Adam all died, even so in Christ shall all be made alive;' that is, at the day of judgment; then death shall be destroyed. In the meantime, death hath a sting and a bitterness; a curse it is, and an express of the Divine anger: and if this sting be not taken away here, we shall have no participation of the final victory over death. Either therefore infants must be for ever without remedy in this evil consequent of their father's sin, or they must be adopted into the parti-

¹ Rom. v. 17, 18.

² Vide Aug. lib. iv. contra duas Epistolas Pelag. c. iv. lib vi. contra Jur. cap. 4.

cipation of Christ's death, which is the remedy. Now how can they partake of Christ's death, but by baptism into his death? For if there be any spiritual way fancied, it will, by a stronger argument, admit them to baptism: for if they can receive spiritual effects, they can also receive the outward sacrament; this being denied only upon pretence they cannot have the other. If there be no spiritual way extraordinary, then the ordinary way is only left for them. If there be an extraordinary, let it be shown, and Christians will be at rest concerning their children. One thing only I desire to be observed, that Pelagius denied original sin, but yet denied not the necessity of infants' baptism; and being accused of it in an epistle to pope Innocent I. he purged himself of the suspicion, and allowed the practice, but denied the inducement of it. Which shows, that their arts are weak that think baptism to be useless to infants, if they be not formally guilty of the prevarication of Adam. By which I also gather, that it was so universal, so primitive a practice, to baptize infants, that it was greater than all pretences to the contrary: for it would much have conduced to the introducing his opinion against grace and original sin, if he had destroyed that practice which seemed so very much to have its greatest necessity from the doctrine he denied. But against Pelagius, and against all that follow the parts of his opinion, it is of good use which St. Austin, Prosper, and Fulgentius argue: "If infants are punished for Adam's sin, then they are also guilty of it in some sense." *Nimis enim impium est hoc de Dei sentire justitia, quòd à pravaricatione liberos cum reis voluerit esse damnatos*: so

Prosper.¹ *Dispendia quæ flentes nascendo testantur, dicito quo merito sub justissimo et omnipotentissimo judice eis, si nullum peccatum attrahant, arrogantur,* said St. Austin. For the guilt of it signifies nothing but the obligation to the punishment; and he that feels the evil consequent, to him the sin is imputed: not as to all the same dishonour, or moral accounts, but to the more material, to the natural account. And in Holy Scripture the taking off the punishment is the pardon of the sin; and in the same degree the punishment is abolished, in the the same God is appeased; and then the person stands upright, being reconciled to God by his grace. Since therefore infants have the punishment of sin, it is certain that sin is imputed to them; and therefore they need being reconciled to God by Christ: and if so, then when they are baptized into Christ's death and into his resurrection, their sins are pardoned, because the punishment is taken off; the sting of natural death is taken away, because God's anger is removed, and they shall partake of Christ's resurrection; which because baptism does signify and consign, they also are to be baptized. To which also add this appendant consideration, that whatsoever the sacraments do consign, that also they do convey and minister: they do it, that is, God by them does it, lest we should think the sacraments to be mere illusions, and abusing us by deceitful ineffective signs. And therefore to infants the grace of a title to a resurrection and reconciliation to God by the death of Christ is conveyed, because it signifies and consigns this to them more to the life and analogy of resem-

¹ Prosper contra Collatorem, c. 20.

blance, than circumcision to the infant sons of Israel. I end this consideration with the words of Nazianzen: *Ἡ γέννησις ἐκ βαπτίσματος πᾶν ἀπὸ γενέσεως κάλυμμα περιτέμνει ἢ πρὸς τὴν ἄνω ζωὴν ἱκανάγει*¹ Our birth by baptism does cut off every unclean appendage of our natural birth, and leads us to a celestial life. And this in children is therefore more necessary, because the evil came upon them without their own act of reason and choice; and therefore the grace and remedy ought not to stay the leisure of dull nature, and the formalities of the civil law.

18. Fifthly, The baptism of infants does to them the greatest part of that benefit which belongs to the remission of sins: for baptism is a state of repentance and pardon for ever. This I suppose to be already proved; to which I only add this caution, that the Pelagians, to undervalue the necessity of supervening grace, affirmed, that baptism did minister to us grace sufficient to live perfectly, and without sin for ever. Against this St. Jerome sharply declaims, and affirms, *Baptismus præterita donare peccata, non futuram servare justitiam*; ² that is, *non statim justum facit, et omni plenum justitiâ*; as he expounds his meaning in another place. *Vetera peccata conscindit, novas virtutes non tribuit; dimittit à carcere, et dimisso, si laboraverit, præmia pollicetur.* Baptism does not so forgive future sins that we may do what we please, or so as we need not labour and watch, and fear perpetually, and make use of God's grace to actuate our endeavours; but puts us into a state of pardon; that is, in a covenant of grace, in which so long as we labour and repent, and strive to do our duty, so

¹ Orat. 40, de Baptism.

² Lib. iii. adv. Pelag.

³ Lib. i. in initio.

long our infirmities are pitied, and our sins certain to be pardoned upon their certain conditions ; that is, by virtue of it we are capable of pardon, and must work for it, and may hope it. And therefore infants have a most certain capacity and proper disposition to baptism : for sin creeps before it can go, and little indecencies are soon learned, and malice is before their years, and they can do mischief and irregularities betimes. And though we know not when, nor how far they are imputed in every month of their lives ; yet it is an admirable art of the Spirit of grace to put them into a state of pardon, that their remedy may at least be as soon as their necessity. And therefore Tertullian and Gregory Nazianzen advised the baptism of children to be at three or four years of age ; meaning, that they then begin to have little inadvertencies and hasty follies, and actions so evil as did need a lavatory. But if baptism hath an influence upon sins in the succeeding portions of our life, then it is certain, that their being presently innocent does not hinder and ought not to retard the sacrament : and therefore Tertullian's *Quid festinat innocens ætas ad remissionem peccatorum ?*¹ “ What need innocents hasten to the remission of sins ? ” is soon answered. It is true, they need not in respect of any actual sins, for so they are innocent ; but in respect of the evils of their nature, derived from their original, and in respect of future sins in the whole state of their life, it is necessary they be put into a state of pardon before they sin, because some sin early, some sin later ; and therefore, unless they be baptized so early as to prevent the first sins, they

¹ Lib. de Baptis. c. 18.

may chance die in a sin, to the pardon of which they have yet derived no title from Christ.

·19. Sixthly, The next great effect of baptism which children can have is the Spirit of sanctification: and if they can be 'baptized with water and the Spirit,' it will be sacrilege to rob them of so holy treasures. And concerning this, although it be with them as St. Paul says of heirs, 'the heir so long as he is a child differeth nothing from a servant, though he be Lord of all;' and children, although they receive the spirit of promise, and the spirit of grace, yet in respect of actual exercise they differ not from them that have them not at all; yet this hinders not but that they may have them. For as the reasonable soul and all its faculties are in children, will, and understanding, passions, and powers of attraction and propulsion, yet these faculties do not operate or come abroad till time and art, observation and experience have drawn them forth into action; so may the spirit of grace, the principle of Christian life, be infused, and yet lie without action till in its own day it is drawn forth. For in every Christian there are three parts concurring to his integral constitution, body, and soul, and spirit; and all these have their proper activities and times, but every one in his own order; first that which is natural, then that which is spiritual: and what Aristotle said, "a man first lives the life of a plant, then of a beast, and lastly of a man," is true in this sense. And the more spiritual the principle is, the longer it is before it operates, because more things concur to spiritual actions than to natural: and these are necessary, and therefore first; the other are perfect, and therefore last. And who is he that so well understands

the philosophy of this third principle of a Christian's life, the spirit, as to know how or when it is infused, and how it operates in all its periods, and what it is in its being and proper nature ; and whether it be like the soul, or like the faculty, or like a habit ; or how, or to what purposes, God in all varieties does dispense it ? These are secrets which none but bold people use to decree, and build propositions upon their own dreams. That which is certain is,—that the spirit is the principle of a new life, or a new birth ; that baptism is the laver of this new birth ; that it is the seed of God, and may lie long in the furrows before it springs up ; that from the faculty to the act the passage is not always sudden and quick ; that the spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, that is, of resurrection to eternal life ; which inheritance, because children we hope shall have, they cannot be denied to have its seal and earnest ; that is, if they shall have all, they are not to be denied a part ; that children have some effects of the spirit, and therefore do receive it, and are baptized with the spirit, and therefore may with water : which thing is therefore true and evident, because some children are sanctified, as Jeremy and the Baptist, and therefore all may. And because all sanctification of persons is an effect of the Holy Ghost, there is no peradventure but they that can be sanctified by God, can in that capacity receive the Holy Ghost : and all the ground of dissenting here is only upon a mistake ; because infants do no act of holiness, they suppose them incapable of the grace of sanctification. Now sanctification of children is their adoption to the inheritance of sons, their presentation to Christ, their consignation to Christ's service and to resurrection,

grace, and by it men were not made, but
righteous; the inferior faculties obeyed the
superior; the mind was whole and right, and
able to the divine image; the reason and
will always concurring, the will followed reason,
reason followed the laws of God: and no
man had not lost this, he was pleasing to God,
and should have passed to a more perfect state.
because this, if Adam had stood, should be
born with every child, there was in infancy
a principle which was the seed of holy life here
and blessed hereafter: and yet the children who
were gone in the road of nature then as well as
the spirit should have operated at nature's
call, being the giver of both, would have
them instrumental to and perfective of each
but not destructive. Now what was lost is
restored by Christ,* the same rights
only it is not born, but superinduced, not
but interrupted: but such as it is, there is
reference, but that the same or the like principle
be derived to us from Christ as there was

regularity of faculties, a beauty in the soul, and a state of acceptation with God, and we see also in men of understanding and reason, the Spirit of God dwells in them; (which Tatianus describing uses these words: ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ ὡςτις ἔνασμα τῆς ἐνέργειας τοῦ (Πνεύματος) κατοικήσκει, the soul is possessed with sparks, or materials, of the power of the Spirit;) and yet it is sometimes ineffective and inactive, sometimes more, sometimes less, and does no more to its work at all times than the soul does at all times understand. Add to this, that if there be in infants naturally an evil principle, a proclivity to sin, an ignorance and pravity of mind, a disorder of affections; (as experience teacheth us there is, and the perpetual doctrine of the church, and the universal mischiefs issuing from mankind, and the sin of every man does witness too much;) why cannot infants have a good principle in them, though it works not till its own season, as well as an evil principle? If there were not by nature some evil principle, it is not possible that all the world should choose sin. In free agents it was never heard that all individuals loved and chose the same thing, to which they were not naturally inclined: neither do all men choose to marry, neither do all choose to abstain; and in this instance there is a natural inclination to one part. But of all the men and women in the world there is no one that hath never sinned. ‘If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,’ said an apostle.¹ If therefore nature hath in infants an evil principle, which operates when the child can choose, but is all the while within the soul, either

¹ 1 John, i 8.

infants have by grace a principle put into them, or else sin abounds where grace does not superabound, expressly against the doctrine of the apostle. The event of this discourse is, that if infants be capable of the spirit of grace, there is no reason but they may and ought to be baptized, as well as men and women; unless God hath expressly forbidden them, which cannot be pretended: and that infants are capable of the spirit of grace, I think is made very credible. *Christus infantibus infans factus, sanctificans infantes*, said Irenæus: "Christ became an infant among the infants, and does sanctify infants." And St. Cyprian affirms, *Esse apud omnes, sive infantes sive majores natu, unam divini muneris æquitatem*:¹ "There is the same dispensation of the divine grace to all alike, to infants as well as to men." And in this royal priesthood, as it is in the secular, kings may be anointed in their cradles. *Dat (Deus) sui spiritûs occultissimam gratiam, quam etiam latenter infundit in parvulis*;² "God gives the most secret grace of his Spirit, which he also secretly infuses into infants." And if a secret infusion be rejected, because it cannot be proved at the place and at the instant, many men that hope for heaven will be very much to seek for a proof of their earnest, and need an earnest of the earnest. For all that have the Spirit of God cannot in all instances prove it, or certainly know it: neither is it defined by how many indices the Spirit's presence can be proved or signified. And they limit the Spirit too much, and understand it too little, who take account of his secret workings, and measure them by the material lines and methods of natural and animal

¹ Ep. ad Fiden. lib. iii. ep. 8.

² S. Aug. lib. de Pecc. mor. et remiss. c. 9.

effects. And yet, because whatsoever is holy is made so by the Holy Spirit, we are certain that the children of believing, that is, of Christian, parents are holy. St. Paul affirmed it, and by it hath distinguished ours from the children of unbelievers, and our marriages from theirs. And because the children of the heathen, when they come to choice and reason, may enter into baptism and the covenant, if they will, our children have no privilege beyond the children of Turks or heathens, unless it be in the present capacity; that is, either by receiving the Holy Ghost immediately, and the promises, or at least having a title to the sacrament, and entering by that door. If they have the spirit, nothing can hinder them from a title to the water; and if they have only a title to the water of the sacrament, then they shall receive the promise of the Holy Spirit, the benefits of the sacrament; else their privilege is none at all, but a dish of cold water which every village nurse can provide for her new-born babe.

20. But it is in our case as it was with the Jews' children; our children are a holy seed: for if it were not so with Christianity, how could St. Peter move the Jews to Christianity by telling them 'the promise was to them and their children?' for if our children be not capable of the spirit of promise and holiness, and yet their children were holy, it had been a better argument to have kept in the synagogue, than to have called them to the Christian church. Either therefore, 1, there is some holiness in a reasonable nature, which is not from the spirit of holiness; or else, 2, our children do receive the Holy Spirit, because they are holy; or, if they be not holy, they are in worse

condition under Christ than under Moses; or if none of all this be true, then our children were holy by having received the Holy Spirit of promise, and consequently nothing can hinder them from being baptized.

21. And indeed if the Christian Jews, whose children were circumcised, and made partakers of the same promises and title, and inheritance, and sacraments which themselves had at their conversion to the faith of Christ, had seen their children now shut out from these new sacraments, it is not to be doubted but they would have raised a storm greater than could have easily been suppressed, since about their circumcisions they had raised such tragedies and implacable disputations. And there had been great reason to look for a storm; for their children were circumcised, and if not baptized, then they were left under a burden which their fathers were quit of: for St. Paul said, ‘Whosoever is circumcised is a debtor to keep the whole law.’ These children therefore that were circumcised stood obliged, for want of baptism, to perform the law of ceremonies; to be presented into the temple, to pay their price, to be redeemed with silver and gold, to be bound by the law of pollutions and carnal ordinances; and therefore, if they had been thus left, it would be no wonder if the Jews had complained and made a tumult: they used to do it for less matters.

22. To which let this be added, that the first book of the New Testament was not written till eight years after Christ’s ascension, and St. Mark’s gospel, twelve years. In the meantime, to what Scriptures did they appeal; by the analogy or proportion of what writings did they end their

questions? Whence did they prove their articles? They only appealed to the Old Testament, and only added what their lord superadded. Now either it must be said that our blessed Lord commanded that infants should not be baptized, which is nowhere pretended; and if it were, cannot at all be proved; or if by the proportion of Scriptures they did serve God, and preach the religion, it is plain, that by the analogy of the Old Testament, that is, of those Scriptures by which they proved Christ to be come and to have suffered, they also approved the baptism of infants, or the admitting them to the society of the faithful Jews, of which also the church did then principally consist.

23. Seventhly, That baptism, which consigns men and women to a blessed resurrection, doth also equally consign infants to it, hath nothing, that I know of, pretended against it; there being the same signature and the same grace, and in this thing all being alike passive, and we no way co-operating to the consignation and promise of grace. And infants have an equal necessity, as being liable to sickness and groaning with as sad accents, and dying sooner than men and women, and less able to complain, and more apt to be pitied, and broken with the unhappy consequents of a short life and a speedy death, *et infelicitate priscorum, hominum*, with the infelicity and folly of their first parents; and therefore have as great need as any: and that is capacity enough to receive a remedy for the evil which was brought upon them by the fault of another.

24. Eightly, And after all this, if baptism be that means which God hath appointed to save us,

it were well if we would do our parts towards infants' final interest, which whether it depends upon the sacrament and its proper grace, we have nothing to rely upon but those texts of Scripture which make baptism the ordinary way of entering into the state of salvation; save only we are to add this, that because of this law, since infants are not personally capable, but the church for them, as for all others indefinitely, we have reason to believe that their friends' neglect shall by some way be supplied; but hope hath in it nothing beyond a probability. This we may be certain of, that naturally we cannot be heirs of salvation, for by nature we are children of wrath; and therefore an eternal separation from God is an infallible consequent to our evil nature. Either, therefore, children, must be put into the state of grace, or they shall dwell forever where God's face does never shine. Now there are but two ways of being put into the state of grace and salvation; the inward, by the Spirit, and the outward by water; which regularly are together. If they be renewed by the Spirit, what hinders them to be baptized, who receive the Holy Ghost as well as we? if they are not capable of the Spirit, they are not capable of water; and if of neither, where is their title to heaven, which is neither internal nor external, neither spiritual nor sacramental, neither secret nor manifest, neither natural nor gracious, neither original nor derivative? And well may we lament the death of poor babes that are *ἄβαντοι*, concerning whom, if we neglect what is regularly prescribed to all that enter heaven, without any difference expressed or case reserved, we have no reason to be comforted over our dead children, but may weep as they that

no hope.¹ We may hope when our neglect was the hinderance, because God hath wholly taken matter into his own hand, and then it cannot err; and though we know nothing of the end, yet we know much of God's goodness: when God hath permitted it to us, that is, he hath permitted children to our ministry, whatever happens to the innocents, we may well trust God will require the souls at our hands; we cannot be otherwise secure, but that it will end concerning our children which St. Ambrose in a case like this, *Anima illa potuit salva si habuisset purgationem.*² "This soul might have gone to God, if it had been purified and saved." We know God is good, infinitely good; we know it is not at all good to tempt his mercy; and he tempts him that leaves the usual way and pretends it is not made for him, and yet expects to be at his journey's end, or expects to meet his child in heaven, when himself shuts that way against him, which, for aught he knows, is the only one that stands open. St. Austin was against in this question against unbaptized infants, where he is called *durus pater infantum*: though we do not know why the original of that opinion should be attributed to him, since St. Ambrose said the same before him, as appears in his words before in the margin.

And now that I have enumerated the blessings which are consequent to baptism, and have made apparent that infants can receive these

¹ *quis renatus fuerit, &c. Utique nullum excipit, non aliter, non aliquâ præventum necessitate.*—Ambr. de Abrah. ii. c. 11.

² *ii. c. 11. de Abrah. Patriarch.*

blessings, I suppose I need not use any other persuasions to bring children to baptism. If it be certain they may receive these good things by it, it is certain they are not to be hindered of them without the greatest impiety and sacrilege and uncharitableness in the world. Nay, if it be only probable that they receive those blessings, or if it be but possible they may, nay, unless it be impossible they should, and so declared by revelation or demonstratively certain; it were intolerable unkindness and injustice to our pretty innocents, to let their crying be unpitied, and their natural misery eternally irremediable, and their sorrows without remedy, and their souls no more capable of relief than their bodies of physic, and their death left with the sting in, and their souls without spirits to go to God, and no angel-guardian to be assigned them in the assemblies of the faithful, and they not to be reckoned in the accounts of God and God's church. All these are sad stories.

26. There are in Scripture very many other probabilities to persuade the baptism of infants: but because the places admit of divers interpretations, the arguments have so many diminutions, and the certainty that is in them is too fine for easy understandings, I have chosen to build the ancient doctrines upon such principles which are more easy and certain, and have not been yet sullied and rifled with the contentions of an adversary. This only I shall observe, that the words of our blessed Lord, 'Unless a man be born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven,' cannot be expounded to the exclusion of children, but the same expositions will also make baptism not necessary for men. For if they be both ne-

cessary ingredients, water and the spirit, then let us provide water, and God will provide the spirit; if we bring wood to the sacrifice, he will provide a lamb. And if they signify distinctly, one is ordinarily as necessary as the other; and then infants must be baptized, or not be saved. But if one be exegetical and explicative of the other, and by water and the spirit is meant only the purification of the spirit, then where is the necessity of baptism for men? It will be as the other sacrament, at most but highly convenient, not simply necessary; and all the other places will easily be answered, if this be avoided. But however these words being spoken in so decretory a manner, are to be used with fear and reverence; and we must be infallibly sure, by some certain infallible arguments, that infants ought not to be baptized, or we ought to fear concerning the effect of these decretory words. I shall only add two things by way of corollary to this discourse.

27. That the church of God, ever since her numbers were full, hath for very many ages consisted almost wholly of assemblies of them who have been baptized in their infancy. And although, in the first callings of the Gentiles, the chiefest and most frequent baptisms were of converted and repenting persons and believers, yet from the beginning also the church hath baptized the infants of Christian parents; according to the prophecy of Isaiah: 'Behold, I will lift up my hands to the Gentiles, and set up a standard to the people, and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.'¹

¹ Isa. xlix. 22.

Concerning which I shall not only bring the testimonies of the matter of fact, but either a report of an apostolical tradition, or some argument from the fathers, which will make their testimony more effectual in all that shall relate to the question.

28. The author of the book of Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, attributed to St. Denys the Areopagite, takes notice, that certain unholy persons, and enemies to the Christian religion, think it a ridiculous thing that infants, who as yet cannot understand the divine mysteries, should be partakers of the sacraments; and that professions and abrenunciations should be made by others for them and in their names. He answers, that "Holy men, governors of churches, have so taught, having received a tradition from their fathers and elders in Christ." By which answer of his, as it appears that he himself was later than the Areopagite, so it is so early by him affirmed, that even then there was an ancient tradition for the baptism of infants, and the use of godfathers in the ministry of the sacrament: concerning which, it having been so ancient a constitution of the church, it were well if men would rather humbly and modestly observe, than like scorers deride it; in which they show their own folly as well as immodesty. For what indecency or incongruity is it, that our parents, natural or spiritual, should stipulate for us, when it is agreeable to the practice of all the laws and transactions of the world, an effect of the communion of saints and of Christian economy? For why may not infants be stipulated for as well as we? All were included in the stipulation made with Adam; he made a losing bargain for himself, and we smarted for his folly. And if the faults of parents,

and kings, and relatives do bring evil upon their children, and subjects, and correlatives, it is but equal that our children may have benefit also by our charity and piety. But concerning making an agreement for them, we find that God was confident concerning Abraham, that he would teach his children: and there is no doubt but parents have great power, by strict education and prudent discipline, to efform the minds of their children to virtue. Joshua did expressly undertake for his household: 'I and my house will serve the Lord:' and for children we may better do it, because till they are of perfect choice, no government in the world is so great as that of parents over their children, in that which can concern the parts of this question; for they rule over their understandings, and children know nothing but what they are told, and they believe it infinitely. And it is a rare art of the Spirit, to engage parents to bring them up well in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and they are persons obliged by a superinduced band, they are to give them instructions and holy principles as they give them meat. And it is certain that parents may better stipulate for their children than the church can for men and women; for they may be present impostors and hypocrites, as the church-story tells of some, and consequently *παρὰβαπτίζαι*, not really converted, and ineffectually baptized; and the next day they may change their resolution, and grow weary of their vow. And that is the most that children can do when they come to age; and it is very much in the parents whether the children shall do any such thing or no:¹

¹ Horat. lib. i. Sat. 6.

for education can introduce a habit and a second nature, against which children cannot kick, unless they do some violence to themselves and their inclinations. And, although it fails too often whenever it fails, yet we pronounce prudently concerning future things, when we have a less influence into the event than in the present case, (and therefore are more unapt persons to stipulate,) and less reason in the thing itself, (and therefore have not so much reason to be confident.) Is not the greatest prudence of generals instanced in their foreseeing future events, and guessing at the designs of their enemies, concerning which they have less reason to be confident than parents of their children's belief of the Christian creed? To which I add this consideration, that parents or godfathers may therefore safely and prudently promise that their children shall be of the Christian faith, because we not only see millions of men and women who believe the whole creed only upon the stock of their education, but there are none that ever do renounce the faith of their country and breeding, unless they be violently tempted by interest or weakness, antecedent or consequent. He that sees all men almost to be Christians because they are bid to be so, needs not question the fittingness of godfathers promising in behalf of the children for whom they answer.

29. And however the matter be for godfathers, yet the tradition of baptizing infants passed through the hands of Irenæus.¹ *Omnem ætatem sanctificans per illam quæ ad ipsam erat similitudinem. Omnes enim venit per semetipsum salvare, omnes, inquam, qui per eum renascuntur in Deum, infantes, et per-*

¹ Lib. ii. c. 39.

vulos, et pueros, et juvenes, et seniores. Ideo per omnem venit ætatem, et infantibus infans factus, sanctificans infantes; in parvulis parvulus, &c. “Christ did sanctify every age by his own susception of it, and similitude to it: ¹ for he came to save all men by himself; I say, all who by him are born again unto God, infants, and children, and boys, and young men, and old men. He was made an infant to infants, sanctifying infants; a little one to the little ones, &c.” And Origen is express: *Ecclesia traditionem ab apostolis suscepit etiam parvulis dare baptismum,*² “The church hath received tradition from the apostles to give baptism to children.” And St. Cyprian in his epistle to Fidus gives account of this article: for being questioned by some less skilful persons, whether it were lawful to baptize children before the eighth day, he gives account of the whole question. And a whole council of sixty-six bishops upon very good reason decreed, that their baptism should at no hand be deferred; though whether six or eight or ten days, was no matter, so there be no danger or present necessity. The whole epistle is worth the reading.

30. But besides these authorities of such who wrote before the starting of the Pelagian questions, it will not be useless to bring the discourses of them and others; I mean the reason upon which the church did it both before and after.

31. Irenæus’s argument was this: “Christ took upon him our nature to sanctify and to save it, and

¹ Vide etiam Constitut. Clementis, βαπτίζετε δὲ παῖδια ὑμῶν, καὶ ἐκτρέφετε αὐτὰ ἐν παιδείᾳ καὶ νοθεσίᾳ Θεοῦ.

² Lib. v. ad Rom. c. 6. Idem Hom. xiv. in Lucam, et lib. viii. Hom. viii. in Levitic.

passed through the several periods of it, even unto death, which is the symbol and effect of old age; and therefore it is certain he did sanctify all the periods of it: and why should he be an infant, but that infants should receive the crown of their age, the purification of their stained nature, the sanctification of their persons; and the saving of their souls by their infant Lord and elder brother?"

32. *Omnis enim anima eousque in Adam censetur, donec in Christo recenseatur; tamdiu immunda, quamdiu recenseatur:*¹ "Every soul is accounted in Adam, till it be new accounted in Christ; and so long as it is accounted in Adam, so long it is unclean;" and we know 'no unclean thing can enter into heaven;' and therefore our Lord hath defined it, 'Unless ye be born of water and the spirit, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven;' that is, ye cannot be holy. It was the argument of Tertullian,² which the rather is to be received, because he was one less favourable to the custom of the church in his time of baptizing infants, which custom he noted and acknowledged, and hath also, in the preceding discourse, fairly proved. And indeed, (that St. Cyprian may superadd his symbol,)³ "God, who is no acceptor of persons, will also be no acceptor of ages. For if to the greatest delinquents, sinning long before against God, remission of sins be given when afterwards they believe, and from baptism and from grace no man is forbidden, how much more ought not an infant be forbidden, who being new born hath sinned nothing, save only that being in the flesh, born of Adam, in his

¹ Tertullian.

² Lib. de Anima, c. 39 et 42.

³ S. Cyprian ep. ad Fidum.

first birth he hath contracted the contagion of an old death; who therefore comes the easier to obtain remission of sins, because to him are forgiven, not his own, but the sins of another man? None ought to be driven from baptism and the grace of God, who is merciful, and gentle, and pious unto all; and therefore much less infants, who more deserve our aid, and more need the divine mercy, because in the first beginning of their birth, crying and weeping, they can do nothing but call for mercy and relief. “For this reason it was (saith Origen¹) that they to whom the secrets of the divine mysteries were committed, did baptize their infants, because there were born with them the impurities of sin;” which did need material ablution, as a sacrament of spiritual purification. For that it may appear that our sins have a proper analogy to this sacrament, the body itself is called the body of sin; and therefore the washing of the body is not ineffectual towards the great work of pardon and abolition. Indeed after this ablution there remains concupiscence or the material part of our misery and sin. For Christ by his death only took away that which, when he did die for us, he bare in his own body upon the tree. Now Christ only bare the punishment of our sin, and therefore we shall not die for it; but the material part of the sin Christ bare not: sin could not come so near him; it might make him sick and die, but not disordered and stained. He was pure from original and actual sins; and therefore that remains in the body, though the guilt and punishment be taken off, and changed into advantages and grace; and the actual are re-

¹ Origen, lib. v. ad Rom. c. 6.

lieved by the Spirit of grace descending afterwards upon the church, and sent by our Lord to the same purpose.

33. But it is not rationally to be answered what St. Ambrose says, *Quia omnis peccato obnoxia, ideo omnis ætas sacramento idonea.*¹ “For it were strange that sin and misery should seize upon the innocent and most unconsenting persons; and that they only should be left without a sacrament, and an instrument of expiation.” And although they cannot consent to the present susception, yet neither do they refuse: and yet they consent as much to the grace of the sacrament as to the prevarication of Adam; and because they suffer under this, it were but reason they should be relieved by that. And “It were better (as Gregory Nazianzen affirms) that they should be consigned and sanctified without their own knowledge, than to die without their being sanctified:”² for so it happened to the circumcised babes of Israel. And if the conspersion and washing the door-posts with the blood of a lamb did sacramentally preserve all the first-born of Goshen, it cannot be thought impossible or unreasonable, that the want of understanding in children should hinder them from the blessing of a sacrament, and from being redeemed and washed with the blood of the Holy Lamb, who was slain for all from the beginning of the world.

34. After all this, it is not inconsiderable, that we say the church hath great power and authority about the sacraments; which is observable in many instances. She appointed what persons she

¹ S. Ambr. de Abrah. Patr. lib. ii. cap. 11.

² Greg. Naz. κρείσσον γὰρ ἀναισθήτως ἀγιασθῆναι, ἢ ἀπελθεῖν ἀσφράγισα καὶ ἀτέλεσα. Orat. 40. in S. Bapt.

pleased, and in equal power made an unequal dispensation and ministry. The apostles first dispensed all things, and then they left off exterior ministeries to attend to the word of God and prayer: and St. Paul accounted it no part of his office to baptize, when he had been separated by imposition of hands at Antioch to the work of preaching and greater ministeries; and accounted that act of the church the act of Christ, saying, 'Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.' They used various forms in the ministration of baptism; sometimes baptizing in the name of Christ, sometimes expressly invoking the holy and ever-blessed Trinity: one while 'I baptize thee,' as in the Latin church; but in the Greek, 'Let the servant of Christ be baptized.' And in all ecclesiastical ministeries the church invented the forms, and in most things hath often changed them, as in absolution and excommunication. And sometimes they baptized people under their profession of repentance, and then taught them: as it happened to the gaoler and his family; in whose case there was no explicit faith aforehand in the mysteries of religion, so far as appears; and yet he, and not only he but all his house, were baptized at that hour of the night when the earthquake was terrible, and the fear was pregnant upon them; and this upon their master's account, as it is likely. But others were baptized in the conditions of a previous faith, and a new-begun repentance.¹ They baptized in rivers, or in lavatories, by dipping, or by sprinkling: for so we find that St. Laurence did as he went to martyr-

¹ Non ut delinquere desinant, sed quia desiverunt, as Tertullian phraseth it.

dom, and so the church did sometimes to clinics, and so it is highly convenient to be done in northern countries; according to the prophecy of Isaiah, ‘ So shall he sprinkle many nations,’¹ according as the typical expiations among the Jews were usually by sprinkling. And it is fairly relative to the mystery, to the ‘ sprinkling with the blood of Christ,’² and the watering of the furrows of our souls with the dew of heaven, to make them bring forth fruit unto the Spirit and unto holiness.³ The church sometimes dipped the catechumen three times, sometimes but once.⁴ Some churches use fire in their baptisms: so do the Ethiopians; and the custom was ancient in some places. And so in the other sacrament; sometimes they stood, and sometimes kneeled; and sometimes received it in the mouth, and sometimes in the hand; one while in leavened, another while in unleavened bread: sometimes the wine and water were mingled, sometimes they were pure; and they admitted some persons to it sometimes, which at other times they rejected; sometimes the consecration was made by one form, sometimes by another: and, to conclude, sometimes it was given to infants, sometimes not. And she had power so to do; for in all things, where there was not a commandment of Christ expressed or implied in the nature and in the end of the institution, the church had power to alter the particulars as was most expedient, or conducing to edification. And although the after-ages of the

¹ Isa lii. 15.

² 1 Pet. i. 2.

³ Aqua refectionis, et baptismi lavacrum, quo anima sterilis ariditate peccati ad bonos fructus inferendos divinis muneribus irrigatur. Cassiodor. m. 23, ps. 2.

⁴ ἔνιοι τὰ ὤτα τῶν σφραγισμένων κατεσημύναντο, dixit Heracleon apud Clem. Alex.

church, which refused to communicate infants, have found some little things against the lawfulness, and those ages that used it found out some pretences for its necessity; yet both the one and the other had liberty to follow their own necessities, so in all things they followed Christ. Certainly there is infinitely more reason why infants may be communicated, than why they may not be baptized. And that this discourse may revert to its first intention, although there is no record extant of any church in the world which, from the apostles' days inclusively to this very day, ever refused to baptize their children; yet if they had upon any present reason, they might also change their practice when the reason should be changed: and therefore, if there were nothing else in it, yet the universal practice of all churches in all ages is abundantly sufficient to determine us, and to legitimate the practice, since Christ hath not forbidden it. It is sufficient confutation to disagreeing people, to use the words of St. Paul: 'We have no such custom, nor the churches of God,' to suffer children to be strangers from the covenant of promise, till they shall enter into it as Jews or Turks may enter; that is, by choice and disputation. But although this alone, to modest and obedient, that is, to Christian spirits, be sufficient, yet this is more than the question did need: it can stand upon its proper foundation.

*Quicumque parvulos recentes ab uteris matrum baptizandos negat, anathema esto.*¹ "He that refuseth to baptize his infants, shall be in danger of the council."

¹ Concil. Milevit. Can. 2.

THE PRAYER.

O holy and eternal Jesus, who in thine own person wert pleased to sanctify the waters of baptism, and by thy institution and commandment didst make them effectual to excellent purposes of grace and remedy, be pleased to verify the holy effects of baptism to me and all thy servants whose names are dedicated to thee in an early and timely presentation; and enable us with thy grace to verify all our promises, by which we were bound then, when thou didst first make us thy own portion and relatives in the consummation of a holy covenant. O be pleased to pardon all those indecencies and unhandsome interruptions of that state of favour in which thou didst plant us by thy grace, and admit us by the gates of baptism: and let that Spirit which moved upon those holy waters never be absent from us, but call upon us and invite us by a perpetual argument and daily solicitations and inducements to holiness; that we may never return to the filthiness of sin, but by the answer of a good conscience may please thee, and glorify thy name, and do honour to thy religion and institution in this world, and may receive the blessings and rewards of it in the world to come, being presented to thee pure and spotless in the day of thy power, when thou shalt lead thy church to a kingdom, and endless glories Amen.

APPENDIX TO SECT. 9, Numb. 3. OF
JESUS BEING BAPTIZED, &c.

CHRIST'S PRAYER AT HIS BAPTISM.

O Father, according to the good pleasure of thy will I am made a man, and from the time in which I was born of a virgin unto this day I have finished those things which are agreeing to the nature of man, and with due observance have performed all thy commandments, the mysteries and types of the law: and now truly I am baptized, and so have I ordained baptism, that from thence, as from the place of spiritual birth, the regeneration

of men may be accomplished : and as John was the last of the legal priests, so am I the first of the evangelical. Thou therefore, O Father, by the mediation of my prayer, open the heavens, and from thence send thy Holy Spirit upon this womb of baptism ; that as he did untie the womb of the virgin, and thence form me, so also he would loose this baptismal womb, and so sanctify it unto men, that from thence new men may be begotten, who may become thy sons, and my brethren, and heirs of thy kingdom. And what the priests under the law until John could not do, grant unto the priests of the New Testament, (whose chief I am in the oblation of this prayer,) that whensoever they shall celebrate baptism, or pour forth prayers unto thee, as the Holy Spirit is seen with me in open vision, so also it may be made manifest that the same Spirit will adjoin himself in their society a more secret way, and will by them perform the ministeries of the New Testament, for which I am made a man ; and as the high-priest I do offer these prayers in thy sight.

This prayer was transcribed out of the Syriac *Catena* upon the third chapter of St. Luke's gospel, and is by the author of that *Catena* reported to have been made by our blessed Saviour immediately before the opening of the heavens at his baptism ; and that the Holy Spirit did descend upon him while he was thus praying ; and for it he cites the authority of St. Philoxenus. I cannot but foresee that there is one clause in it which will be used as an objection against the authority of this prayer ; viz. "as John was the last of the legal priests ;" for he was no priest at all, nor ever officiated in the temple, or at the Mosaic rites. But this is nothing : because, that the Baptist was of the family of the priests, his father Zachary is a demonstration ; that he did not officiate, his being employed in another ministry is a sufficient answer ; that he was the last of the priests is to be

understood in this sense, that he was the period of the law, the common term between the law and gospel. By him the gospel was first preached solemnly, and therefore in him the law first ended. And as he was the last of the prophets, so was he the last of the priests : not but that after him many had the gift of prophecy, and some did officiate in the Mosaical priesthood ; but that his office put the first period to the solemnity of Moses's law ; that is, at him the dispensation evangelical did first enter.

That the ministers of the gospel are here called priests, ought not to be a prejudice against this prayer in the persuasions of any men ; because it was usual with our blessed Saviour to retain the words of the Jews, his countrymen, before whom he spake, that they might, by words to which they were used, be instructed in the notice of persons and things, offices and ministeries evangelical, which afterwards were to be represented under other, that is, under their proper names.

And now, all that I shall say of it is this :—1. That it is not unlikely but our blessed Saviour prayed when he was baptized, and when the Holy Ghost descended upon him ; not only because it was an employment symbolical to the grace he was to receive, but also to become to us a precedent by what means we are to receive the Holy Spirit of God. 2. That it is very likely our blessed Lord would consecrate the waters of baptism to those mysterious ends whither he designed them, as well as the bread and chalice of the holy supper. 3. That it is most likely the easterlings did preserve a record of many words and actions of the holy Jesus, which are not transmitted to us. 4. It is certain that our

blessed Lord did do and say many more things than are in the holy Scriptures; and that this was one of them, we have the credit of this ancient author, and the authority of St. Philoxenus. However, it is much better to make such good use of it as the matter and piety of the prayer will minister, than to quarrel at it by the imperfection of uncertain conjectures.

END OF PART I.



Work is under no circumstances to be taken from the Building

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